

# History of Westminster

By

M. Elizabeth Minard Simonds



1791-1981



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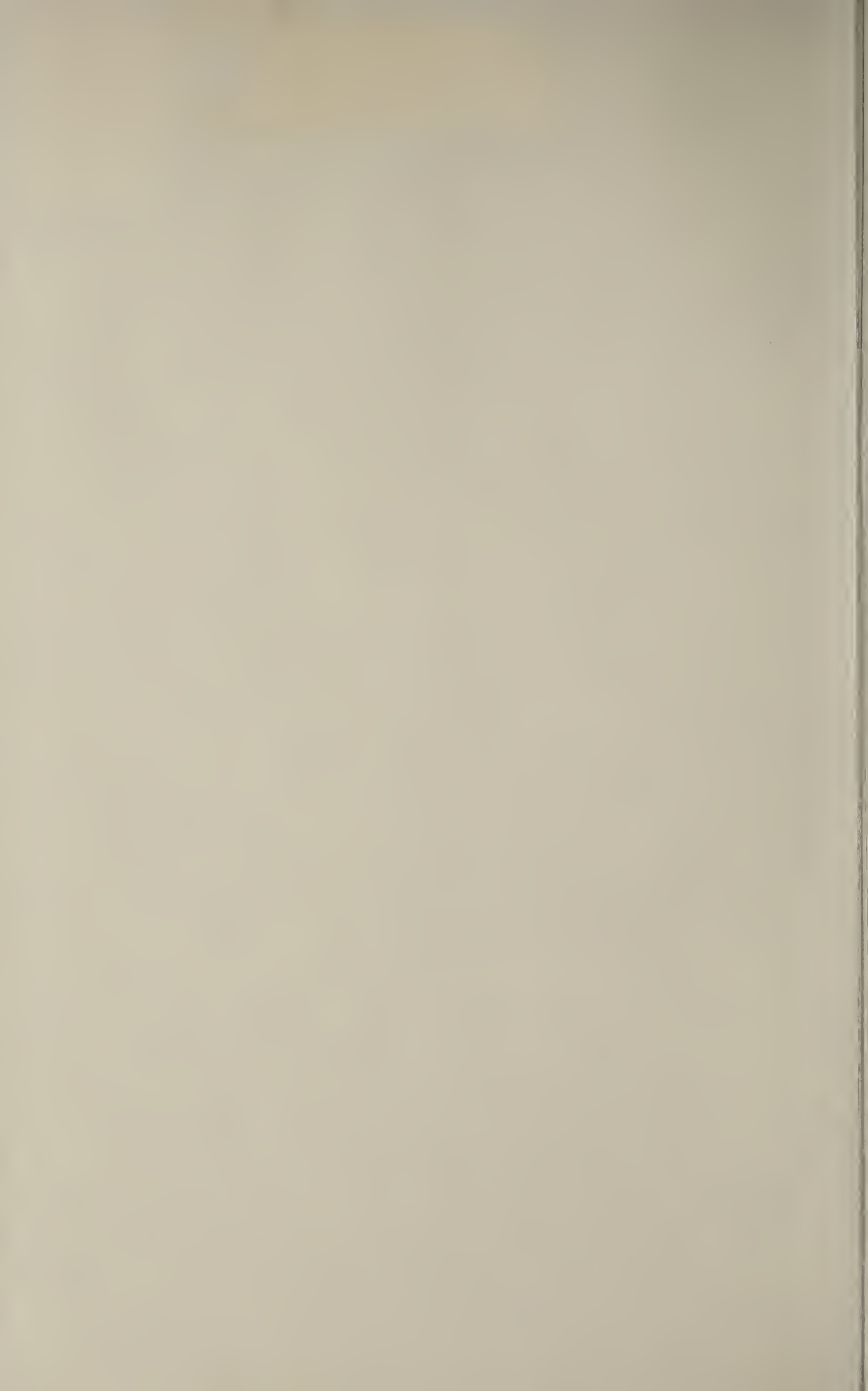
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### *Coolidge's Tribute to Vermont*

"Vermont is a State I love. I could not look upon the peaks of Ascutney, Killington, Mansfield and Equinox without being moved in a way that no other scene could move me. It was here that I first saw the light of day; here I received my bride; here my dead lie pillowed on the loving breast of our everlasting hills.

"I love Vermont because of her hills and valleys, her scenery and invigorating climate, but most of all I love her because of her indomitable people. They are a race of pioneers who have almost beggared themselves in the service of others. If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the Union and if support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished by the generous store held by the people of this brave little State of Vermont."

—CALVIN COOLIDGE

*To*  
*Residents of Westminster*

# History of Westminster



1791-1981

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*The Lights of Home*

The lights of home! a welcome sight  
As homeward coming in the night  
I see them flicker thru the trees  
That bend and sway with gentle breeze.  
A tiny speck——not all could see;  
But lights of home mean much to me.

The lights of home! keep burning bright.  
I think were I to lose my sight  
I still could see your beck'ning gleam;  
And feel your warmth——detect your sheen.  
Tho near or far I chance to roam  
My heart will long for lights of home.

——MARGARET WRIGHT BENT.

621



THE OLD MEETING HOUSE.



## *Introduction*

In presenting this history to you I have endeavored to bring to the public eye a picture of our historic township down through the years.

Westminster is not only rich in her own history but overflowing with her contributions to the welfare of our country. Her people have gone forth in various paths of life. She has raised poets, musicians, writers, lawyers, politicians, doctors, ministers and teachers. Her youth have been inspired to further their education and by doing so have made this world of ours a better place to live. Her native born have traveled far. Still others returned and have given the best in them to make our town what she is today. Then there are those who have become natives by adoption. They too are making history.

Sometimes we grumble and complain, even wish we lived somewhere else (especially around tax time), but as every cloud has a silver lining so has ours. Climbing over the hill pastures, ambling through the valleys, riding along the Old Kings Highway overlooking the Connecticut river or gazing from Kurn Hattin across to neighboring New Hampshire hills and seeing fertile fields give forth rich crops, one forgives and forgets the unpleasant memories. Breathing in the pure fresh air he resolves to do his share in making the Westminster of tomorrow that much better for his having lived here.

A friendly spirit hovers near as we watch from afar to see that no harm comes to our neighbor. Unconsciously the people are forgetting themselves in doing for others as is shown by the items we read in the local papers, of a wood chopping bee that was held for a sick neighbor or a shower for the neighbor whose home was destroyed by fire. Life in a rural town is rich in human interests and emotions. We live by doing, and by doing, live.

On behalf of the readers of this book I thank all those who have in any way helped to make this history more interesting by their contributions. We are indebted to George Olmstead of Saxtons River for his excellent photography, Herbert Rhoades for his untiring interest in digging up facts and pictures, Bertha Miller Collins, Edwin Gorham, Margaret Wright Bent and countless others whose names will be found here and there throughout the book have all had a part in making a vision come true.

I have not attempted to give you a complete history, for such an undertaking would take years of research. It is, however, my sincere wish that you will derive as much enjoyment and pleasure from reading as I have in writing and compiling these historical facts.

May it give to the future generations a better idea of Westminster in 1941, Vermont's Sesquicentennial year.

M. ELIZABETH MINARD

*Vermont, O State of Beauty*

Song

1.

Vermont, O State of beauty.  
We love thy lakes and rills,  
The little streams that wander  
Close, nestled in thy hills.  
We love the peaceful murmur,  
Of softly babbling brook,  
Where speckled trout dart shyly  
From out some shaded nook.

2.

Vermont, O State of beauty.  
Each season brings its charms,  
Each day brings sweet contentment.  
A sense of peace and calm.  
Above thy green-clad mountains  
The stars more brightly shine.  
May God watch ever over  
Vermont, your State and mine.

Refrain

VERMONT, VERMONT,  
Beloved green mountain state  
We see God's hand about us  
In land and water scape.  
VERMONT, VERMONT,  
Tho near or far we roam  
Thy valleys and thy hill-sides  
Will ever call us home.

Words and music by Margaret Wright Bent.



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*History of Westminster Early Days*

On March 4, 1791, Vermont was admitted to the Union. This year, 1941, is our 150th Anniversary as a part of the world's outstanding democracy. It is fitting that we in the town of Westminster do our share in this commemorable year of our state's history.

Westminster, originally known as Township No. 1, or, as it was sometimes called, New Taunton, in honor of the residence of the greater number of the grantees, was the first township granted in the State of Vermont, although the charter of the present Westminster, received from the government of New Hampshire bears the date, Nov. 9, 1752, being the third chartered in the State, Bennington and Halifax having received theirs a few years before.

The volume containing the original records of the proprietors of Township No. 1, was discovered in 1848, by Mr. Timothy H. Hall, sheriff of Windham county, while examining the Cheshire county records at Keene, N. H. On giving bonds for the safe keeping of this volume, he was permitted to take it home with him. The people of Westminster voted \$20. to procure a facsimile copy, to preserve these records from oblivion. The original volume was afterward presented to the town of Westminster by the judges of the Cheshire County Court. The hand writing is of rare beauty, the cover of parchment, and the whole in an excellent state of preservation. The volume also contains the records of the original grantees of Winchester, Westmoreland and Claremont. These are today still in the town clerk's office.

This tract of land as nearly six miles square as the land in breadth would allow was granted to certain petitioners from Taunton by the Great and General Court of Massachusetts, Nov. 24th, 1735, they having been admitted as grantees on the 19th of the same month. 60 settlers were admitted to a township and they were required to give bonds to the value of 40 pounds each for the performance of the conditions of their grant.

The first meeting of the grantees was held at the school house in Taunton, Jan. 14, 1736. A committee of six was appointed who should repair to Township No. 1, and lay out 63 house lots according to the direction of the General Court; each lot not to exceed 50 acres, nor less than 10, and to proportion the same according to quality, that each lot might be of equal



Court House



value. They were also to select a suitable place for the meeting-house and lay out a convenient road or roads through the town, and lay out a convenient training-field and burying-place near the meeting-house plat, and also lay out a convenient place (if any there be) near to or within said house lots, for a saw-mill and a grist mill.

These lots, one of each kind, were, Sept. 26, 1737, assigned to the grantees, each person receiving as many rights as he had given bonds for and paid charges.

On the 28th of May, 1739, a sum to the amount of 240 pounds (about \$1,200) was appropriated for the encouragement of the first settlers, one half to be paid to such of the proprietors as should actually repair to No. 1 during that year and build a dwelling house on his lot according to court act, and by June 15, 1740, fence in and break up for plowing, or clear and stock with English grass, 5 acres of land. The remaining half to be paid to such as should actually inhabit their houses, either by themselves or some other Christian subject to the King, for the space of three months from June 15, 1740, each one to draw his proportion according to the number of houses he should have inhabited at the end of that time.

It appears from the records that one Richard Ellis did repair to Township No. 1 in 1739, built a dwelling house, broke up 5 or 6 acres of land, and received for his services a gratuity of 45 pounds. Several others were, during this and the next year, engaged in laying out roads and building fences and received gratuities for their services. The proprietors had in project other improvements, such as the laying out of lands not already appropriated and the construction of a road to Fort Dummer, when on the 5th of March, 1740, the northern boundary line of Massachusetts was fixed, which excluded Township No. 1 from that province.

At a meeting of the proprietors held at the school house in Taunton Apr. 5, 1742, Joseph Eddy was appointed agent to wait on the committee of the General Court to whom they gave bonds for the settlement of the township, to acquaint them with their difficulties and the labor and money they had expended in settling their grant, and to receive such directions as might be of service to them in securing their rights under the jurisdiction of New Hampshire. This appears to have been the last meeting of the proprietors under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and the settlement was probably abandoned on the breaking out of

### Cape Breton War.

In the opening of 1751, John Averill, with his wife and son, Asa, removed from Northfield, Mass., to No. 1, at which time there were but two houses in the place; one on the top and the other at the foot of Willard's or Clapp's hill, at the southern extremity of the 10 rods highway. The latter, which was unoccupied, was probably the one built by Mr. Ellis and his son in 1739. Mr. Averill moved into the one on the top of the hill, which had been occupied by four men, one woman and two children. The men were William Goold and his son, John, Amos Carpenter, and Atherton Chaffee. Two of these, Goold and Carpenter, removed their families from Northfield to No. 1 during the summer of the same year. The first child born in Westminster was Anna Averill, in the autumn of 1751.

On the 9th of Nov., 1752, township No. 1 was re-chartered by Governor Benning Wentworth, of New Hampshire, and its name changed to Westminster.

Under this charter the township was entitled to the privilege of holding town fairs as soon as there should be 50 families resident and settled. It was also provided that a town market should be opened and kept one or more days each week, as might be most advantageous to the inhabitants.

The conditions of this grant were that every grantee should plant or cultivate 5 acres of land within 5 years for every 50 acres contained in his share, and continue to improve and settle the same by additional cultivation on penalty of the forfeiture of his grant.

A reservation was made of all white and other pine trees fit for masting the royal navy.

A reservation was also made of a tract of land as near the center of the township as the land would admit, for town lots (this reservation to be made before any further division of land); one of these lots to be divided among the grantees, each receiving one acre and paying for it one ear of Indian corn on the first day of January each year for 10 years, if lawfully demanded, and after that a revenue of one shilling a year for every 100 acres he owned.

The first meeting of the grantees was held at Winchester, at the house of Josiah Willard, Aug. 22, 1753 and met by several adjournments at Fort Dummer, Oct. 29th of the same year.

It was decided at this latter meeting that those proprietors who had purchased rights according to the Massachusetts grant,

and now held those rights, should have their house lots and first division meadow lots where they had them before, and have the liberty of taking them without a draft, and that the rest of the house lots and meadow lots be drawn for, and that there be six house lots and six meadow lots laid out, the house lots to contain 15 acres each and the meadow lots not above 4 acres each, after which there should be a second division of all the meadow land in the township, and also a division of upland, each to be divided equally into 69 lots, the upland not to contain less than 50 acres to each proprietor. It was also voted to lay out the Governor's two shares at the upper end of the township (formerly "Church Meadow" and is now where W. S. Powers lives), and to lay out the whole of the share belonging to the glebe or Church of England in some suitable place, and the share for the Incorporated Society where the committee should think best. The records contain no account of any further meeting of the proprietors for more than 7 years.

During the latter part of the summer of 1753 the Indians began their incursions on several settlements in New Hampshire. This alarmed the inhabitants of Westminster, who were few in number and poorly protected, and they removed to Walpole where they remained until October, and then returned. In the spring Mr. Averill and family removed to Putney, and the settlement was for a time abandoned.

On the 11th of June, 1760, Col. Josiah Willard, jun., obtained a renewal of the charter of Westminster and called a meeting of the proprietors, which was held Feb. 4, 1761, at the house of John Averill, in Westminster, of which Benjamin Bellows, of Walpole was moderator. Measures were taken for an allotment of the lands and preparations made for a permanent settlement.

At a meeting held May 6, 1761, certain valuable lands—50 acres on the Mill Brook and some 60 acres at the lower end of the Governor's meadow—were voted to Col. Willard for encouragement to build a saw-mill and grist-mill.

The town records for the next 20 years, except certain records of deeds have not been preserved.

It appears, however, from other sources, that Westminster enjoyed a good degree of prosperity, attracting settlers from the older provinces and that before the close of 1766, there were upwards of 50 families in the place, and according to the census ordered by the Governor of New York in 1771, it was the most populous town in this part of the province, the whole number of residents being 478.



In the year 1763, there arose a controversy between the Governors of New Hampshire and New York, each claiming the lands lying on the west side of the Connecticut River. The subject was referred to the decision of the King, who, by an order dated July 20, 1764, declared "the western banks of the river Connecticut, from where it enters the province of Massachusetts Bay, as far north as the 45th degree of northern latitude, to be the boundary line between the said two provinces of New Hampshire and New York."

In accordance with this decision Westminster came under the jurisdiction of New York. On the 26th of March, 1772, a new charter was issued by the Governor of New York to certain grantees who conveyed to Col. Josiah Willard, then of Winchester, N. H., and he executed releases to such of the former proprietors, or their assigns, as chose to take titles under the new authority.

We approach now that stormy period in the history of the American colonies which immediately preceded the Revolution.

In 1772 the courts of Cumberland county, in the province of New York (which county embraced nearly the same territory as the present counties of Windham and Windsor), were removed from Chester to Westminster. Here was soon to be witnessed the first grand uprising of the people of what is now known as the Green Mountain State, in resistance to the authority of the government of Great Britain; and here was to flow the first blood, at least in the State of Vermont, in the cause of American Independence.

In the early part of 1774, Isaac Low, chairman of a committee of correspondence in the city of New York, to ascertain the feelings of the colony with regard to the usurpations of Great Britain, wrote to the supervisors of Cumberland county in May to ascertain what measures the people would be likely to adopt in the present crisis. At their meeting in June the supervisors took no action upon this letter, and for some reason the knowledge of it was kept from the people. The secret, however, became known to Dr. Reuben Jones, of Rockingham, and Capt. Azariah Wright, of Westminster. who communicated it to the inhabitants of their respective towns.

Meetings were then called in these towns and a committee chosen to wait upon the supervisors at their meeting in September, and ascertain if such a letter had been received by them, and why it had not been laid before the people of the county. "They made many excuses," said Dr. Jones.

The committee would not give their consent to have any return made until Mr. Low's letter had been laid before every town in the county.

Accordingly a convention was called to meet at the "County Hall," at Westminster, on the 19th of October, which held a session of two days. Here it was resolved; "That as true and loyal subjects of the King, they would spend their lives and fortunes in his service; and that they would defend the King while he reigned over them, as his subjects, so they would defend their just rights, as British subjects, against every foreign power that should attempt to deprive them those rights, while breath was in their nostrils and blood in their veins."

On the 5th of Sept. a Continental Congress was convened at Philadelphia to adopt measures against the usurpation of royal authority in the colonies. This was followed by a second convention at Westminster, on the 30th of November, which adopted all the resolves of the Continental Congress and the delegates bound themselves, as representatives of their constituents, "religiously to adhere to the non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation association."

On the 7th of Feb., 1775, a third convention was held at Westminster, whose main object was to obtain, if possible, from the legislature of New York, the passage of such laws as would tend to improve the mode of administering justice in the county courts. Their special cause of grievance was the "great expense and heavy burdens" imposed upon them by reason of the additional courts that had been established, in consequence of which law suits had increased and charges had been multiplied and families nearly beggared.

The "acts and resolves" of the Continental Congress which had been adopted by the people of Cumberland county in open convention, had however been rejected by the General Assembly of New York. And while in other colonies the meeting of the Continental Congress had been followed by an almost universal suspension of royal authority, the higher civil officers in the colony of New York remained loyal to the King, and the courts still continued to be held, but being administered in the interests of the crown they were so oppressive as to be almost insufferable on the part of those who had espoused the liberal cause. And those who expressed their dissatisfaction were denounced as "guilty of high treason", for with-holding their allegiance from the King.

The people were no longer willing to trust themselves in the hands of those whom they regarded as enemies of American liberty. And "in duty to God, to Themselves, and to their posterity, they thought themselves under the strongest obligations to resist and to oppose all authority that would not accede to the resolves of the Continental Congress."

Such was the state of feeling which led to that memorable event in the history of this town, known as "THE WESTMINSTER MASSACRE", which occurred on the 13th of Mar., 1775. The scene of this event was the "Old Court House," which stood at the extreme north end of the Lower Street on the east side of the road on the spot now known as "Court House Hill," but a short distance from the meeting-house which then occupied the middle of the highway. This building was erected in 1772, at which time the courts of Cumberland county were removed from this place to Chester.

The courts were held there until 1781, when Westminster and Marlborough became half shire towns, until 1787, when New Fane became the county town and a new court-house and jail were erected there. The old court-house in Westminster stood till about the year 1806. One of the doors has been preserved and is on display in the "Historical Room" at the Westminster Institute.

The 14th of March, 1775, was the day on which the county court was to commence at Westminster. To avoid difficulties, it was thought best to request the judges to remain at home. "About forty good, true men," went from Rockingham to Chester to dissuade Col. Chandler, the chief judge, from attending court. He "thought it would be for the good of the country not to hold any court, as things were; but there was one case of murder that they must see to, and if it was agreeable to the people they would not hear any other case." Some one said that "the sheriff would raise a number of men, and there would be blood shed." The judge assured them upon his word and honor that there would be no arms brought against them.

Noah Sabin, one of the associate judges, "was very earnest to have the law go on, as well as many petty officers". Col. Wells, the other, associate judge, was absent, in attendance upon the General Assembly of New York.

There was much debate among the Whigs as to what means they would adopt to prevent the sitting of the Court. It was at length agreed to let the Court come together and then present





Old Court House Door

their reasons for not wishing it to proceed. But upon learning that the Court was to take possession of the house on the 13th inst., and place a strong guard at the doors, they thought best to effect an entrance "before the armed guards were placed," that they might lay before the Court their grievances before it opened.

On Monday, March 13, a party of Whigs from Rockingham came down to Westminster and halted at the house of Capt. Azariah Wright, and repaired from thence to the school-house on the opposite side of the street, and held consultation as to the best manner to prevent the sitting of the Court.

Having armed themselves with sticks from Capt. Wright's wood-pile, they proceeded on their way, and were joined by others armed like themselves, and arriving at the court-house, the whole party to the number of about one hundred, entered about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Soon after this, the High Sheriff, Wm. Paterson, who had on the day previous gone to Brattleboro to obtain assistance in preserving the peace, came up with a large number of men, some of them "armed with guns, swords and pistols, and others with sticks or clubs."

Approaching within about 5 yards of the door, the Sheriff commanded the "rioters," as they were called, to disperse, but obtained no answer. He then ordered the "King's proclamation" to be read, and told them with an oath, if they did not disperse within fifteen minutes, he would "blow a lane through them". The Whigs replied, they would not disperse, but the Sheriff and his company might come in if they would lay aside their arms, but not without.

One of the party within advanced to the door and asked the Tories if they had "come for war," saying "we are come for peace, and would be glad to hold a parley with you." Whereupon Samuel Gale, Clerk of the Court, drew a pistol, and replied with an oath, he would hold no parley with them but by this—referring to his pistol.

The Tories then withdrew a short distance after some pretty harsh language, and held a consultation, and the Whigs sent out three men to treat them, but with no avail.

About 7 o'clock Col. Chandler came in and they laid the case before him, reminding him of his promise that no arms should be brought against them. He said the arms were brought without his consent, but he would go and take them away, and they should enjoy the house undisturbed until morning, and



that the Court should then come in without arms, and would hear what they had to lay before them. Having given them this assurance, he departed. The Whigs then left the house and chose a committee to draw up a list of articles to present to the Court, which was unanimously adopted by the company. Some of them then went home, and some to the neighbors, having left a guard at the court-house to give the alarm in case of an attack during the night.

Meanwhile the sheriff had sent word to all the Tories in the neighborhood to come to his assistance. They met for consultation at Norton's tavern, whence they proceeded in small parties to the court-house a little before mid-night. Their approach was discovered by the sentry, who gave order to "man the doors."

The sheriff marched his company within about 10 rods of the court-house, and advancing towards the door, demanded entrance in His Majesty's name. Seeing his demand was not regarded he told them he should enter quietly if he could, or by force if he must. Being twice repulsed in attempting to effect an entrance, he then ordered his men to fire.

Three shots were fired which passed over the heads of those within. The order was then repeated and several men were wounded; one, Wm. French, was shot with five bullets, one of which passed through his brain, of which wound he died the next day.

"Then," we quote the words of an eye witness, "they rushed in with their guns, swords, and clubs, and did most cruelly maim several more, and took some that were not wounded, and those that were, and crowded them all into close prison together, and then told them they should be in hell before the next night, and that they did wish that there were forty more in the same case with that dying man. When they put him into prison, they took and dragged him as one would a dog, and would mock him as he lay gasping, and make sport for themselves at his dying motions."

In this bloody affray, two of the sheriff's party received slight flesh wounds, and of the Whig party some escaped, ten were wounded, two of them mortally, and seven were taken prisoners.

Tuesday morning, the 14th, all was confusion. At the appointed hour the court convened and prepared a statement of the facts, "exactly as they happened," in the "very melancholy and unhappy affair," that had occurred during the night. It

was thought best not to proceed with business, and an adjournment was made to the second Tuesday in June. That session has never been held.

Meanwhile messengers had been dispatched in all directions and the tidings quickly spread. By noon of the next day more than 400 persons had assembled at Westminster, about half of whom were from New Hampshire; Capt. Benjamin Bellows came with his company from Walpole, and Capt. Sargent with his from Rockingham, another with an organized band from Guilford, and the Westminster militia were in full force under Capt. Azariah Wright

The prisoners who had been confined the night previous were soon set at liberty, and before night the judges with their assistants, the sheriff and such of his party as were engaged in the massacre as could be taken, were put under arrest.

It was with difficulty that the enraged populace were restrained from doing acts of violence. Some demanded that the judges should be brought forth and make satisfactory acknowledgements; and some threatened to burn the court-house and shoot every man engaged in the massacre of the previous night. Through the influence of Capt. Bellows they were dissuaded from carrying their threats into execution.

The morning of the 15th witnessed a renewal of the scenes of the preceding day. An inquest was held on the body of young French, and the sheriff and those of his party imprisoned with him were placed in close confinement.

During the day reinforcements came from the southern part of the county and from the Massachusetts province, and from the west side of the Green Mountains, so that upon the morning of the 16th it was computed that there were "five hundred good martial soldiers, well equipped for war," assembled in Westminster, besides others who had come as private citizens.

A public meeting was held, and a large committee chosen, to consist of persons out of the county as well as in, who, "after the most critical and impartial examination of evidence," decided that the leaders in the massacre should be "confined in Northampton jail till they could have a fair trial," and those who appeared less guilty should be "under bonds, holden to answer at the next court of Oyer and Terminer" to be held in the county.

Those of the court party who were imprisoned were: Thomas Chandler, the chief judge; Bildad Easton, a deputy sheriff; Capt. Benjamin Burt, Thomas Sergeant, Oliver Wells, Joseph



Willard, and John Morse, who were released on the 17th on giving bonds with security to John Hazeltine. Thomas Ellis, against whom no charge was found, was released unconditionally. Noah Sabin, associate judge, Benj. Butterfield, as assistant justice, Wm. Willard, a justice of the peace, Wm. Paterson, the high sheriff, Samuel Gale, the clerk, Benj. Gorton, a deputy sheriff, Richard Hill, William Williams, and one Cunningham, were on the 19th sent down the river under a guard of fifty men and two officers, and confined in jail at Northampton. Here they remained some two weeks, until they were removed on a writ of habeas corpus to New York, for a regular trial in order to their enlargement. We do not learn as they ever had their trial. The Revolutionary War had now become a fact, and other interests were absorbed in that.

This vivid account of the "Westminster Massacre", has been taken word by word from "the History of East Parish" by Rev. F. J. Fairbanks.

William French was a young man of patriotic spirit, and an



Wm. French Tablet



**Wm. French Monument**  
**Located in Old Cemetery at Westminster Village**





Stone marking William French's grave

ardent sympathiser with the liberty party. He was one of those stationed in the court house. "Dr. Wm. Hill of Westminster, was allowed to visit him between three and four the next morning, but his martyr spirit had fled.

Mr. French was buried the same day with military honors in the old graveyard at Westminster, and a stone with the following quaint inscription, marks the spot where he was laid:

"In memory of WILLIAM FRENCH.  
Son to Mr. Nathaniel French. Who  
Was Shot at Westminster March ye 13th,  
1775, by the hands of Cruel Ministerial tools.  
Of George ye 3d, in the Corthouse at a 11  
a Clock  
at Night in the 22d year of his Age.

HERE WILLIAM FRENCH his Body lies.  
For Murder his Blood for Vengeance cries  
King Georg the third his Tory crew  
tha with a Bawl his head Shot Threw.  
For Liberty and his Countrys Good.  
he Lost his Life his Dearest blood."

Geographically speaking nature has been lavish of her gifts to our fair town, the eastern part is surrounded by semi circular ranges of hills of moderate elevation, which, a more gradual slope on the New Hampshire side, forms a vast amphitheatre enclosing within its area the fertile meadows that lie spread out beneath and the Connecticut river that rolls between. Even the most casual observer is attracted to its beauty and a lover of nature its charms never tire.

Three ranges of hills run through the town parallel to each other and rising in gradual succession, the western being the most elevated of the three, with considerable valleys between. The West Parish lies to the west of the first range, and mostly in the second valley, through which runs a small stream upon which is situated the village.

The geological formation of the eastern part of the township is clay slate, and of the western part, calciferous mica schist, and in some localities gneiss occurs. The meadows along the river in the eastern part consist of a rich alluvial soil resting upon a bed of clay. The second plain from the river bed consists of a light, sandy loam; underneath this is a stratum of

gravel, extending from 20 to 40 feet in depth, lying upon a bed of blue clay from two to three feet thick, and this resting upon a bed of quicksand. This stratum of clay dips from the hills on the west to the river on the east, and determines the depth at which in different localities water can be obtained for the supply of springs and wells. In some parts of this clay bed mineral waters, strongly impregnated with iron, are found. Several clay beds of excellent quality are found, some of which is said to be nearly as good as that at Bennington. There are also two beds of marl; one in the west part, of some 15 acres, covered with a bed of muck from 15 to 20 feet thick and more. The other is in the east part, on the farm formerly owned by O. F. Peck. Both of these are said to be shell marl.

The Terraces are supposed to have formed the river bed of the Connecticut at different periods. At Westminster village, they are four in number and correspond with those upon the opposite side of the valley. Another series, nine in number, meet the mouth of Saxton's River, just below Bellows Falls. The second and third of these are what is called by geologists the glacial terrace and are said to be the most perfect specimens found in Vermont. Their length is 14 and 16 rods, and their thickness 10 and 12 feet.



**KING'S HIGHWAY**  
**Looking North from Court House Hill**



Through the principal village, which is situated upon the two lower terraces, extends a broad and beautiful avenue some two miles in length and six rods in width, running nearly parallel with river. This avenue laid out in the time of George II, was a originally 10 rods wide, and was called "THE KING'S HIGHWAY". Aside from its ordinary purpose it was set apart by the original proprietors as a training field, for which it afforded ample accommodations.

The West part was set off, as a parish, by vote of the town, in 1785. The division was made legal by the action of the Legislature of the State in 1797. An additional act of the Legislature, in 1800, appoints that the town and freeman's meeting of the town, shall be held alternately, from year to year, in each of the parishes. The parish line of the town, commencing on the northern boundary of Putney, at the southwest corner of the farm formerly owned by Perez Clark, then westerly to the southwest corner of the farm formerly owned by Addison Dunham, then northerly to Rockingham.

Before the definite action of the town, making the division, it was regarded a distinct parish. In 1784, the town appointed a committee of three from each parish, as a committee to build a meeting-house in the West Parish. The committee from the West Parish were: Lieut. Wm. Crook, Wm. Goodell, and Lieut. David Heaton. There is also a vote appropriating money for the support of preaching in the parish.

The question of a distinct town organization for the parish was early raised. In 1803, the town voted to that effect, and appointed a committee to lay the subject before the Legislature, and secure an organization that should make the West Parish a town, called Westbury.

Who was the first settler in the parish is not certainly known. Jabez Perry from Rehoboth, Mass. (now Seekonk), had built a log-house on the land formerly owned by Geo. A. Goodell, and moved into it, as early as 1762. About the same time Ephraim Wilcox settled on the farm formerly owned by D. C. Gorham. Francis Holden from Shirley, Mass., came into the parish in 1755 or '56, and built a log-hut on land now owned by Roy Parker, where he lived, mostly alone, for some 15 or 20 years. His grist-mill was a hollow log and a large block of wood hung on a spring-pole, to pound the corn-meal. After living in this primitive way for 20 years, and having reached the age of forty, he married Miss Abigail Clawson, of Shirley, Mass., by whom he



had 13 children. Elijah Ranney and James Crawford made settlements in the south part of the parish as early as 1771 or '72.

At a convention held in Westminster, Jan. 15, 1777, Vermont was declared a free and independent State, and Westminster was for a time practically the capital of the State. The General Assembly held its session here in 1780. Here, too, was the first printing office established in Vermont, by the firm of Spooner & Green, in the year 1778. The press and types were removed to Woodstock in 1783.

The State Bank was established here in 1807, and removed to Woodstock in 1811.

Westminster is rich in historical events. Down through the years she has done her part for her state. May this generation continue to uphold the principles and ideals of those early settlers whose never-dying spirits have helped make America what she is to-day. Let everyone join hands and do their share in making this year in Vermont famous in the annals of history.



Court House Marker



View at dedication of Marker on site of Old Court House 1902





“Not a Car in Sight.” Taken at the dedication of Marker on site of Old Court House 1902





*Settlers*  
*Before 1800*



In Memory

*The Wind's Wooing*

'Twas I! O, I it was! who first was here  
To woo the virgin forest strong and tall.  
The limpid lakes; green hills and river's fall;  
The long rich glens and mountains high and sere;  
Far haunts. . . where timid feet of fox and deer  
Have trod a path thru life. The birds that call  
In song. . . then hide in deep retreat; and small  
Things piping roundelays with merry cheer.

I woo these lovely forest maidens who  
Have lived with shy allure on heaven's earth:  
I woo with scent of lily's bloom; with gold  
From sunset's light; I roam and sigh and do  
Great deeds of mighty lovers. Then in mirth  
They whisper low as I their secrets hold!

BERTHA MILLER COLLINS.

## *Early Settlers Before 1800*

Many of the early settlers came from Connecticut and especially in Massachusetts from the settlements along the Connecticut river. Being the natural course for them to follow and clear the fertile lands. Also the river was depended upon for navigation. A great many of this towns first settlers came up from the Mass. "fields" namely, Greenfield, Northfield, Deerfield and Springfield. Old records show that an Aaron Alexander came at a very early period, and began to clear and make preparations to settle but was driven off by the Indians, and was subsequently killed by them. His son, Aaron, settled in Putney, and it was this man's daughter Rhoda who married Eleazer Harlow. He having come here at the age of 20 from Taunton, Mass., and made settlement in 1758 on the place where Charles Willard formerly lived in 1885.

Records show that on November 30, 1724, Captain Kellog commenced sending scouting parties from Fort Dummer to the northward. His journal in the Massachusetts archives XXXVIII, A 70, says. "The fourth struckt out northwest 6 miles then north acrossed West river and to the Great Meadow below ye Great Falls (Westminster) then crossed the Connecticut river and came down on the east side. Among those forty men who performed the Scout services was Eldad Wright an older brother of Capt. Azariah and Medad Wright. The trail to Canada lay up the Connecticut river as far as No. 4. Just above that point they followed up from the mouth of Black river until they reached Otter Creek. Then they followed this stream down Lake Champlain and from there on to Canada. Many a soldier while on his way to No. 4 and to Canada selected a spot on the beautiful meadows, for his future home. Sure enough in 1761 came one of these soldiers. He was non other than Capt. Azariah Wright, Jr. bringing with him his brother, Medad. The homestead of Medad was kept in the family carrying the family name until this present generation. Dan Wright was the last Wright to own it. In 1884 it was moved across the street from the original site.

Among those settling in Westminster before 1760 are the names of Atherton Chaffee, Amos Carpenter, William Goold and his son John, Capt. Michael Gilson, who married the sister of Dea. Sessions, and William Willard Esq.

During the 1760's came John Norton from Farmington, Ct., and kept the "Norton Tavern", Samuel Cone from Haddam, Ct., Joel Holton came at the same time as the Wrights and settled close by them. Aaron Petty and Benjamin Burt. Dan and Azariah Dickinson from Haddam, Ct., (they were two of the nine who constituted the church at the time it was organized in 1767). John Morse came from Sutton, Mass., and settled where the church now stands. Dea. Ephraim Ranney came from Middletown, Conn. and settled on the Upper Street on Lot No. 7. Dea. John Sessions and Nehemiah McNiel were here as early as 1767. James Richardson came from Conn. and settled on Rocky Hill.

Those coming after 1770 were the Burks namely, Jonathan and his three sons, Jesse, Simeon and Silas from Brimfield. The notorious Crean Brush arrived in 1771 and lived in a house that stood just north of the present town hall. He owned about 50,000 acres of land. William Paterson came soon after his friend, Crean Brush, and received the appointment of the shrievalty of Cumberland county. The Phippens, Jonathan, Atwater, Samuel and Joseph, were here about this time, and were all members of the militia company, under Capt. Azariah Wright in 1775. Joshua Stoddard came in 1772, also Bildad Easton, noted for his Tory proclivities and the active part he took at the time of the Revolutionary proceedings. The Robinsons came from Attleboro, Mass. Nathaniel was a deacon of the Baptist church, and the meetings were sometimes held at this house. The Lovejoys were also here at this time. Nathan Fisk, Esq. was jail keeper in 1779. Dr. Elkanah Day was a resident in 1775, and was a prominent and influential man. It was during this period that Stephen Row Bradley came. Others were Jabez Paine, John Lane, and Benjamin Whitney.

Among those arriving in the early 80's were Eliakim Spooner, Dea. Abiel Goodell from Pomfret, Ct. He settled at the south part of the town on the Putney line and was one of the first members of the church in 1767. Dea. Nathaniel Kittredge, Benjamin Goodridge. Thomas Fuller was here in 1785, and settled upon Wellington Hill. His son, Austin, was the first child baptized in the East Parish church. Lot Hall was a resident in 1783. He was chosen to represent the town in the General Assembly in 1789, '91, '92, and 1808. As Presidential Elector in 1792, he cast the vote of the State for George Washington and John Adams.



About the year 1785 or '86 there was an emigration from Worcester Co., Mass., some of whom settled in the south part of Westminster and others in Putney.

John Grout came about this time. He became the grandfather of six ministers and missionaries and missionaries wives, besides one who died during his seminary course. One of these went as missionary to Southern Africa, three to Turkey, and one to the West.

Levi Peck came about 1788. He married a daughter of Joshua Stoddard and was a prominent man and much respected. Another was Rueben Pierce.

Eleazer May came in 1789 from Haddam, Ct., and lived with Mr. Cone, and kept a store a few years upon the upper street; he afterwards built the brick store and entered into partnership with Hon. Mark Richards. In recent years the store has burned and been replaced by the one Ray Metcalf owns. Ellery Albee was a man of considerable influence in town. He was a man of few words, but prompt and efficient in business.

In The West Parish the name of the first settler is not definitely known, but Francis Holden from Shirley, Mass., built a log house at the cross-roads leading over the ninth range into town of Brookline (near Willie Reeds). Jabez Perry also built a log house as early as 1762. Ephraim Wilcox was also one of the first, settling on the farm owned by Henry and Ed. Gorham.

Ephraim Ranney Jr., David Heaton and Jotham Holt, about the year 1768, made an opening in the forests on the farms near the present site of the church. They were young men, and for some time messed together in a log-house built by Ranney, a few feet south of the house now occupied by Burt Ormsby. They made their own porridge and ate out of a common dish.

Mr. Heaton was a passionate man, and when insulted would leave the house. When the porridge was a little short of their wants, Ranney and Holt had only to insult their mess-mate, and they had the dish to themselves.

Others were Ichobod Ide, Elijah Ranney, James Crawford, and Nathaniel Doubleday.

From 1775 to 1780, the population of this parish increased rapidly. Elisha Hitchcock, Heli Hitchcock, Eldad Hitchcock and Aaron Hitchcock, from Brimfield, Mass., Edward Goodell, from Monson, Mass., Jabez Goodell, from Mansfield, Ct. and Moses Goodell, from Canterbury, Ct., had settled in the parish

before 1780. Each of these persons, it is believed, made the first openings on the farms where they located. They all brought up large families and lived and died on the farms, where they put their log-houses when they came to town.

John Tuthill born on Plum Island and coming here from Southhold, Long Island about the year 1786, settled on the farm, which is today nothing but pasture land and is called Goddard Hill. Only a cellar hole remains to show evidence that there once was a farm. He was a member of the prominent Long Island Tuthill family. He married Phoebe Corwin and they are both buried in the village cemetery. In 1937, a representative group of the D. A. R. chapter "Descendants of '76" of Washington, D. C., came here and placed a marker over his grave. A member of the group was Miss Myrtle Schellenger of Washington, D. C. a direct descendant of John Tuthill.

In 1795 came Atherton Hall, with his sons, Atherton and Peter, followed the next year by Barnabas and Scotto Clark and their families. All coming from Cape Cod they made the journey in 14 days, with ox-team. The Clarks brought their gold to pay for their farms. Scotto his, in the center of a tierce of salt. Barnabas expressed his through on the back of his oldest son, Joshua.

The Clarks were followed in 1798, by Matthias Gorham, with his 5 sons, Isaac, Matthias 2nd, David, William and James. He was followed by Lewis Crowell, Elisha Perry, Joseph Hamblin, Howes and Gideon Hallet, all of whom had large families.

*First Town Officers*

The officers chosen at the first town meeting, of which any record is preserved, March 15, 1784, are as follows:

Moderator——John Sessions

Town Clerk——John Tuthill

Selectmen——Nathaniel Robinson, Esq., Capt. Ephraim Ranney and David Heaton.

Treasurer——John Norton

Constables——Edward Goodale and Benjamin Goodrich.

Listers——Capt. John Brailey, Job Dickinson and Medad Wright

Collectors——John Wells, Jr. and Lemuel Cone.

Tithing-Men——John Holt and Joseph Willard

Grand Jurors——John Wise and Ebenezer Holton

Hog Wards——Israel Ide and Charles Rice

Horse Brander——Capt. Benjamin Whitney

Sealer Weights and Measures——Joseph Ide

Fence Viewers——Asa Averill, Capt. Benjamin Whitney and Stanton Richardson.

Overseers of Highways——Capt. Benjamin Burt, Samuel Phippen, Joseph Irwin, Azariah Dickinson, William Crook, Joshua Wells, Jabez Goodale, William Hide, Ensign Nathan Robinson.

Petit Jurors——Billy Willard, James Crawford, Jabez Perry, Asa Averill, Eldad Hitchcock, Abial Goodale, John Holt, Ensign Nathan Robinson, Joseph Ide, Thomas Baldwin.

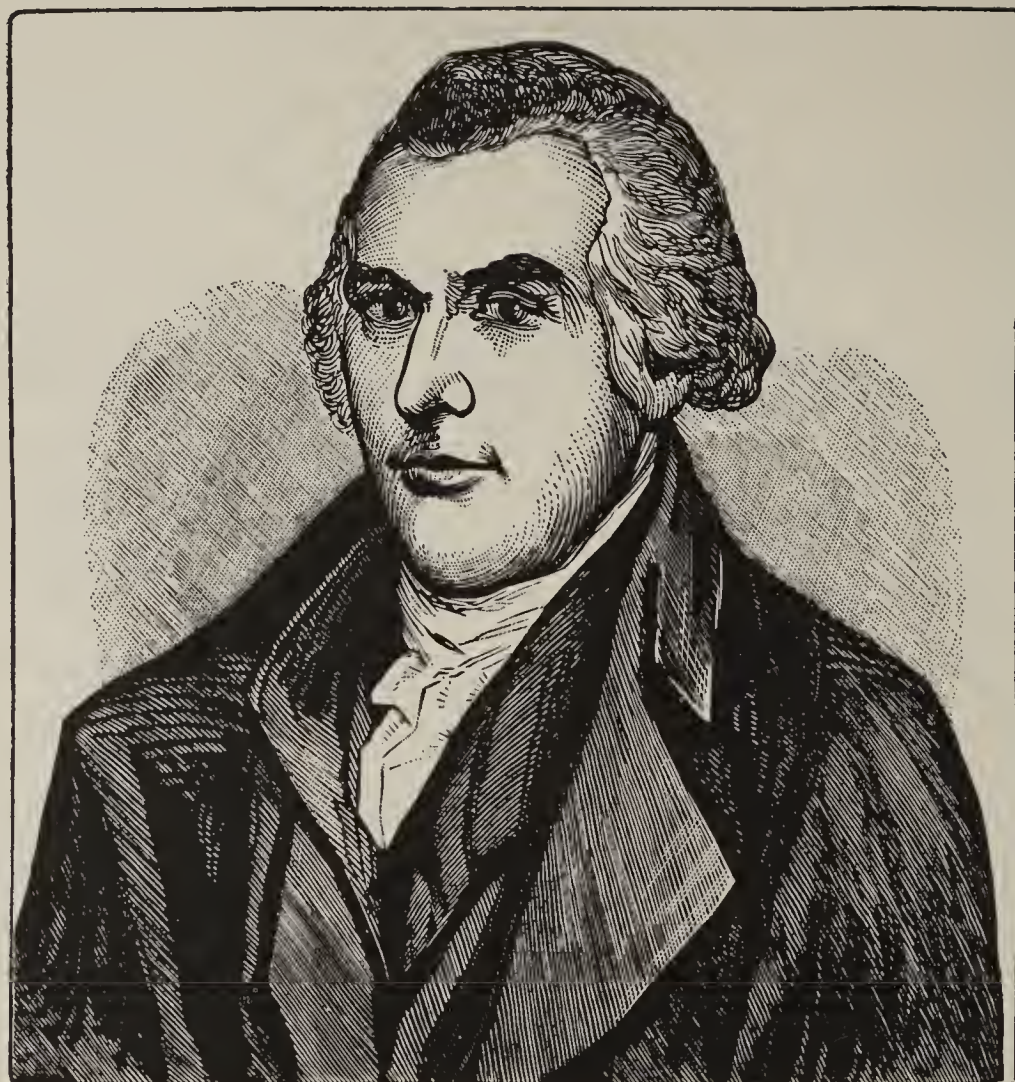
Pound Keeper——Capt. Jesse Burt.

*Present Town Officers*

Moderator——Rollo Metcalf  
 Town Clerk——Lynn Fullam  
 Treasurer——Paul G. Harlow  
 Selectmen——Frank S. Clark, Chrm.; Herbert I Rhoades; L. A. Miller  
 Road Commissioners——Joseph Barnes, Francis Parker  
 Overseer of Poor——Alfred Boule  
 Listers——W. S. Powers, Patrick Harty, Burt Ormsby  
 Auditors——Clarence B. Torrey, Charles E. Minard, Ralph Roberts  
 First Constable——Kenneth Fullam  
 Second Constable——Arthur Bemis  
 Town Grand Jurors——W. H. Powers, Fred Farr.  
 Town Agent——Emil Mattson  
 Trustees of Public Money——Charles Arnold, Carrol Williams, J. W. Collins  
 Cemetery Commissioners——J. W. Collins, F. R. Chapman, Rollo Metcalf, Fred S. Fenn, C. B. Torrey  
 School Directors——Gretta Leach Wood, Clyde Beals, Ralph McCoy.  
 Trustees of Campbell Fund——Jerome Collins, Howard Fenn, Lester Williams.  
 Commissioners of Campbell Fund——Rollo Metcalf, Burt Ormsby, Gerry F Walker.  
 Tax Collector——Town Treasurer, receiver of taxes, First Constable, Collector.  
 Justices of the Peace——Ralph Bresland, Jerome Collins, Patrick Harty, Rollo Metcalf, Burt Ormsby, W. H. Powers, Rollin H. Ranney.  
 Fence Viewers——J. R. Miller, B. J. Houghton, Charles B. Holton.  
 Pound Keepers——Fred Fenn, Arthur Harlow, Maurice Drislane  
 Inspectors of Wood and Lumber——George Pierce, Rollo Metcalf.  
 Weigher of Coal——Ray D. Metcalf  
 Tree Warden——George Wood  
 Fire Wardens——Harry J. Comstock, Claude Bensenhaver, Kenneth Fullam  
 Truant Officer——George Wood.  
 Assistant Town Clerks——Mary A Fullam, Emil M. Mattson.  
 Sesquicentennial Committee——Elizabeth Minard, Claude Bensenhaver, Laura Fenn, Emil Mattson, Mrs. Gerry Walker, Ralph Bresland.



# *Biographies*



*Stephen F. Bradley*

*Stephen Row Bradley*

Stephen Row Bradley was a descendant of William Bradley, the first settler of New Haven, Connecticut, who came to this country with several brothers in 1637. He was born February 20, 1754, a son of Moses and Mary Row Bradley, of Cheshire (then Wallingford), Conn. He graduated at Yale with the degree of A. B., in 1775, and received from his alma mater the degree of A. M., in 1778.

While in college he prepared an almanac for 1775, of which an edition of 2000 copies were published November, 1774. In January after his graduation he entered the army as captain of the Cheshire Volunteers. In December of the same year, with the rank of adjutant, he received the appointment of vendue master and quarter-master.

He afterwards received the appointment of aide-de-camp to Gen. David Wooster. In 1778, he was employed as commissary, and during the summer of 1779 served as major, at New Haven. He studied law with Tapping Reeve, the founder of the Litchfield law school.

His first appearance in the State of Vermont was at the adjourned session of the Superior Court at Westminster, May 26, 1779, and in 1780, he represented the town of Westminster in the General Assembly.

At the session of the court above named, he was commissioned attorney at law, and received license to plead at the bar within the State. He soon took a high position, and his learning and talents were the admiration of all. He at once became prominent as a political leader, and had a large influence in laying the foundations of the new State. He was appointed to present to Congress, at its session in Feb., 1780, the views and feeling of Vermont with reference to the claims of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire and New York.

The result of his efforts is contained in a pamphlet, entitled, "Vermont's Appeal to the candid and impartial world, containing a fair stating of the claims of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire and New York."

This was read before the Council of Vermont, at Arlington, December 10, 1779, and approved and ordered to be published. It is a masterly presentation of the claims of Vermont to independence, and among the various pamphlets written at this period upon this controversy with New York, "Vermont's Appeal" stands pre-eminent.



In August, 1781, Mr. Bradley was commissioned lieutenant of the 1st Regiment of Vermont militia, and in October following was promoted to the office of colonel. This office he resigned in March, 1787, and in January 1791, he received the appointment of brigadier-general of the eighth brigade of the Vermont militia.

The following are among the various offices which he held: He was State's attorney for Cumberland county from 1781-1785; selectman in Westminster in 1782; held the office of town clerk from 1787-1788; from Dec., 1781 to March, 1791, register of probate for Windham county. On Feb. 21, 1783, he was appointed a judge of the court of the county, and from Oct., 1788, to Oct., 1789, side-judge of the Supreme court of Vermont. He represented Westminster in the General Assembly of the State, in 1780, 1781, 1784, 1785, 1788, 1790 and 1800, and 1785 was elected speaker of the house. He was a member of the State Constitutional convention in 1791, and elected to the Council in 1798, and in 1789, he was appointed Commissioner to establish the boundary line between New York and Vermont.

On May 12, 1793, he was admitted to practice in the Circuit court of the United States. He received the honorary titles of M. A. and LL. D. from Dartmouth and Middlebury colleges, and was appointed a fellow of the latter in 1800, which position he held till the time of his death. On the 17th of October, 1791, Mr. Bradley, with Moses Robinson, were elected as the first senators from Vermont to the Congress of the United States; Mr. Bradley for the term of four years and Mr. Robinson for six.

He was again elected for a term of 6 years from March 4, 1801, and during the greater part of the next two years he was president, pro tempore, of the Senate, in the absence of Aaron Burr, Vice-president. At the expiration of this term, he again entered upon another term of 6 years from March 4, 1807, and in 1808 was again president, pro tempore of the Senate, in the place of George Clinton, vice-president, an old adversary in the New York controversy, who had been wont to denounce him as a Rioter.

On retiring from public life Mr. Bradley resumed his residence at Westminster, where he remained until the year 1818, when he removed to Walpole, N. H., where he died Dec. 9, 1830.

NOTE:—Taken from Rev. Fairbanks history of East Parish.



*Crean Brush*

Crean Brush came to this country about 1762 from Dublin, Ireland. He was a lawyer and held a commission in the military service.

When he first came to the country he settled in New York City. For several years he held the office of secretary of the Province of New York. From New York he came to Westminster in 1771. He lived in the house north of the meeting-house. This house was originally built for Rev. Mr. Goodell, the first minister.

Mr. Brush held offices under the government of New York. In February, 1772, he was appointed by Governor Tryon as clerk of Cumberland County. In April of the same year, he was made surrogate of the county, and also was appointed commissioner to administer oaths of civil office. Mr. Brush owned a large amount of land in Westminster and portions of the New Hampshire grants.

In the fall of this same year he went to Boston. There he offered his services to General Gage. General Gage had decided to winter his army in Boston. Finding it necessary to vacate some of the residences of the inhabitants, he intrusted the duty to Crean Brush, who was commissioned to receive and protect such property as should be entrusted to his care. But Brush seized many goods that were not contraband which were stowed away in vessels in the harbour, and attempted to set sail for Halifax. After a few days, he and others were made prisoners by Commodore Manly. He was examined and sent to the jail in Boston, on the charge of plundering the city and carrying away under the protection of the British fleet, large quantities of goods which were the property of the citizens of Boston.

While Mr. Brush was in prison, Mrs. Brush was allowed to visit him. On Wednesday, November 5th, 1778, he made his escape wearing her clothes, and not until the next morning was it discovered that the noted prisoner was gone. Mrs. Brush had left a horse tied at a certain spot, and furnished her husband with the means of escape. After his escape, he started for New York, and arrived there the 16th of November, 1778, after having been in jail for more than nineteen months.

Mr. Brush then directed his efforts toward the recovery of his property. Not being successful in this, he determined to

put an end to a miserable life, and on a cold morning in the following spring, he committed suicide.

Mr. Brush owned about 25,000 acres of land in the state of New York. He owned about the same amount of the grant land in New Hampshire, but only a small part of this came into the hands of his heirs.

Mrs. Brush, now a widow, married Patrick Wall, an Irishman by birth. After living in New York for a while, they came to Westminster. After her death, Mr Wall married Elizabeth Erwin of Westminster.

Mrs. Wall, previous to her marriage with Mr. Brush, had a daughter, Frances, by a former husband. This daughter married a Captain Buchanan and was a widow at the time she came with her mother to Westminster with Mr. Wall. During one of Ethan Allen's visits he became acquainted with Mrs. Buchanan. One day, Mr. Norton, the keeper of the tavern playfully remarked to her, "Fanny, if you marry General Allen, you will be the queen of the new state." "Yes," she replied, "if I should marry the devil, I should be the queen of hell."

She did marry General Allen at the residence of General Stephen R. Bradley.

Crean Brush had by his first wife, before he came to America a daughter, Elizabeth Martha, whom he left in the care of relatives. She had four children by Thomas Norman whom she married in Ireland. At the death of her father, there were three heirs to the estate, and she bought it from the other two and became heir to all of the property. She came to America in 1795 with her husband to claim the property. She lived in Westminster until 1814.

*Seth Arnold*

Mr. Seth Arnold was born in East Haddan, Conn. and came to Westminster about 1782 at the age of 35 years.

He was a shoemaker, tanner and farmer living on road No. 30 In Oct. 1786 he married Ester Ranney and their family has continued to live in town through all the years.

Mr. Charles Arnold who is now over eighty years is the present resident.

Dr. Seth Arnold of Boston bears the grandsires name.

Mr. Arnold fought in the Revolutionary War for three years and lost most of the one thousand dollars which he had previously saved. In fact, he returned from the war with one shilling in his pocket.

Mr. Arnold made a public confession of religious faith at the age of 89, though he had been a substantial and respected citizen throughout his long life.

He died July 6th, 1849 at the advanced age of one hundred and one years, ten months and 3 days.



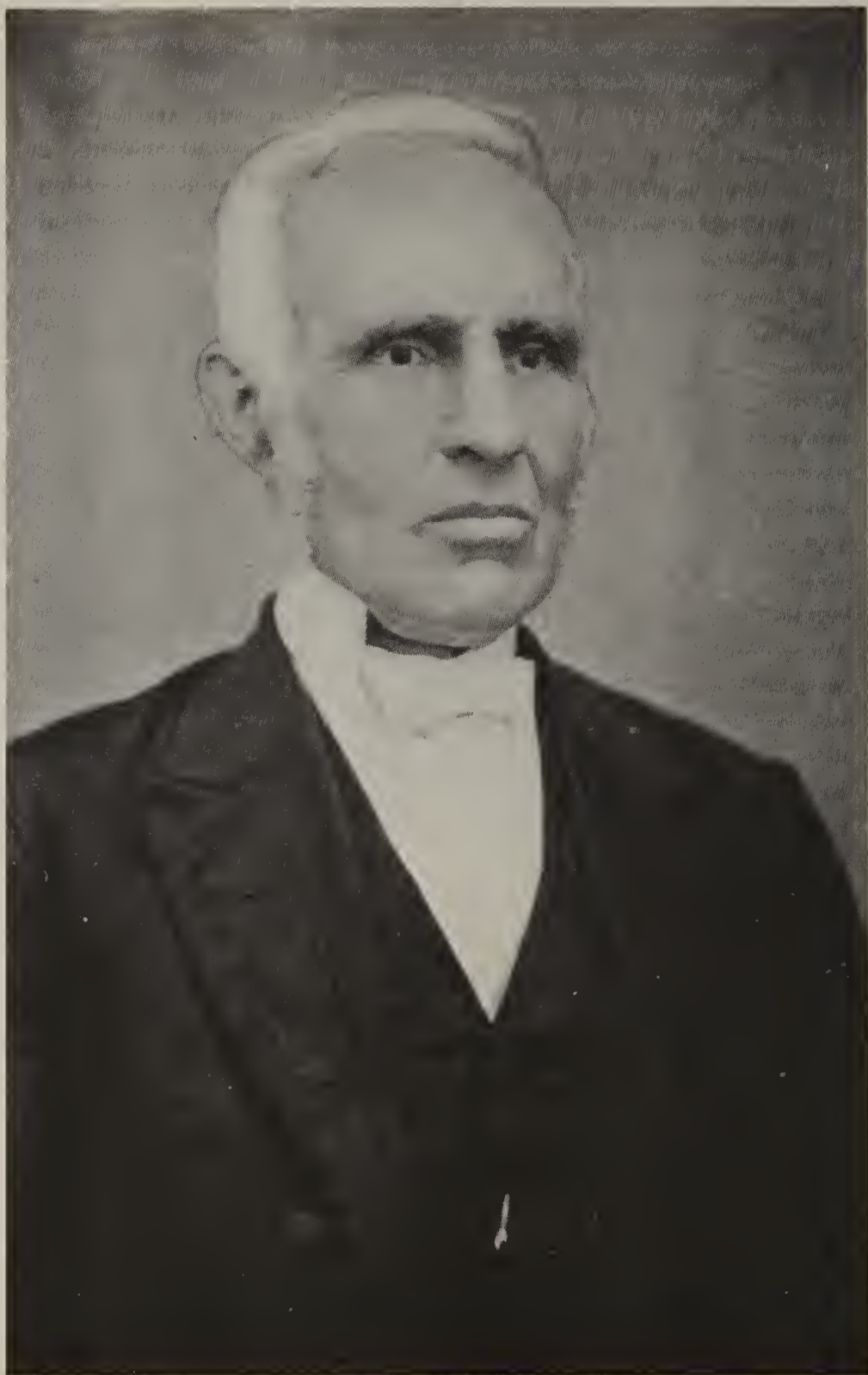
**Descendants of Capt. Azariah Wright. David Wright, Mrs. Alvin Wright, Mary A. Wright Miller, Uncle David Wright, Nellie Wright, Bessie L. Wright, Ernest A. Wright, Clarence Wright, Fred C. Wright, Mr. Alvin Wright**



*Capt. Azariah Wright*

Azariah Wright was born in Massachusetts, March 7, 1737. He married Mary Safford of Hardwick, Mass. She died November 27, 1776, at 34. His second wife was Mirian Hall of Walpole. He was a soldier in the French and Indian war. A few days previous to the battle of Lexington he distinguished himself as captain of a militia company by preventing the holding of court by the English officers in the Court House at Westminster. He was a soldier at Quebec and at Bennington and a friend and kinsman of Col. Ethan Allen. He was called an Ethan Allen on a smaller scale, and during the boundary controversy between the states it is said that he led the people on the east side of the Green Mountains as Ethan Allen did on the west side.

An incident taken from Hall's Eastern Vermont in connection with a case of church discipline serves to show the character of the man. Uncle 'Riah, as they used to call him, had occasion to shoot a bear which he found trespassing in his corn-field on the Sabbath, for which deed he was to be excommunicated from the church. At the close of the service, Mr. Bullen, the pastor, was about to read the letter of excommunication, when Uncle 'Riah presented his gun. Mr. Bullen then passed the letter to Dea. Sessions, who began to read, when Uncle 'Riah levelled his piece upon the deacon. The deacon then returned the letter to the parson with the remark that "all things were lawful but not expedient." After some consultation, the letter was laid aside, and the benediction pronounced, and the congregation left the house, followed by Uncle 'Riah, who locked the door and gave a lad a ninepence to take the key to the sexton.



**Rev. Alfred Stevens**

*Rev. Alfred Stevens*

Alfred Stevens was born at Waterford, Vt., July 30, 1810, the son of Nehemiah and Deborah (Goodell) Stevens.

He worked for 21 years with his father, on the farm, fitted for college at Kimball Union, and Peacham academies. He graduated at Dartmouth College in 1839, and Andover Theological Seminary, 1842, receiving the honorary degree of D. D. in 1874. His diploma still in the fine old leather case is on display in the Westminster West Library. He was pastor for 50 years of the Congregational Church in the West Parish. He officiated at all the funerals with only four exceptions in the community during that time.

He preached the "old Calvinistic doctrines". He inspired his people to go forth as a large number of professional men who left the parish in those years became well known as clergymen, lawyers, and physicians in this and foreign lands, others professors in colleges and higher institutions of learning, while many daughters of the parish became virtuous women in the multitude of homes in the land.

For 25 years he was the Superintendent of schools in the town, and knew every child by name. In 1872 was, by the vote of the town, honored with a seat in the State legislature.

The fortieth anniversary of his ordination was observed February 22, 1883. The good times of the past were talked over, and greetings from those who had been taught from the pulpit and in the Sabbath school, and gone out into the world, were received to cheer his old age with the assurance that he was not forgotten.

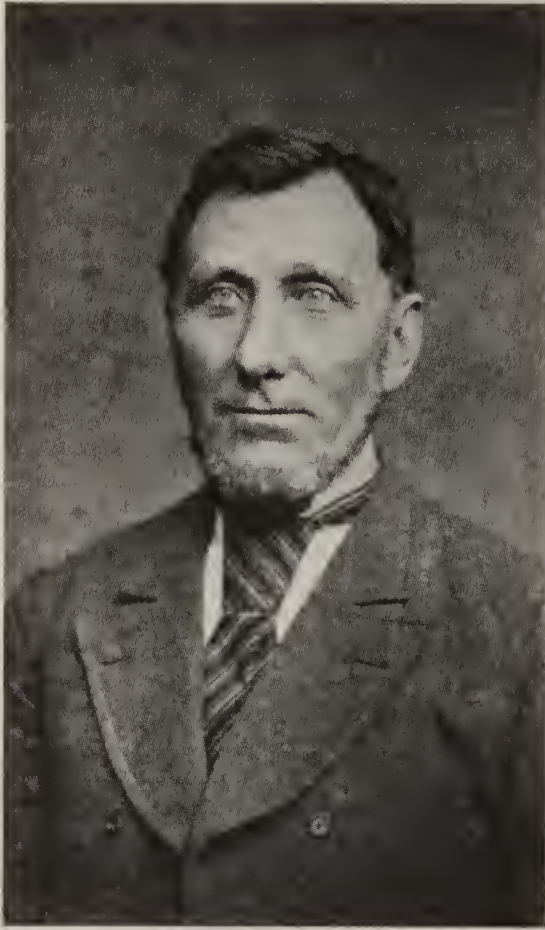
He was married first, August 11, 1844, to Eliza W. Farrar, of Troy, N. H.; second, June 23, 1846, to Mary Ann Arnold of Westminster; third, August 25, 1858, to Harriet N. Wood, of Millbury, Mass; fourth, May 28, 1876, to Mrs. Catherine (Miller) Slate, of Brattleboro, Vt

One summer a small boy came from the city of Brooklyn, N. Y. for his vacation on Dr. Steven's small farm. During those months there grew between the childless man and this young boy such a deep feeling of friendship that at the end of the summer the boy stayed on.

This man and boy developed as strong a feeling for each other as any father and son. That young man is today Anthony Schwenk, Judge of Probate Court, Brattleboro, Vt. He married Mabel Goodhue of Westminster West.

Dr. Alfred Stevens died January 20, 1893. His picture hangs in the church above the pulpit as an everlasting reminder of his memory.





George Campbell



His wife, Adeline (Wilcox) Campbell

### *Campbell*

We first hear of the Campbells when Dr. Edward R. Campbell, known affectionately as "Dr. Ned" came from Oxford, Mass. and settled in Westminster. His father was Dr. Alexander Campbell of Oxford, Mass., a member of the Mass. Provincial Congress in 1774. His grandfather, Rev. John Campbell, also of Oxford, was born in Scotland and was allied with nobility, emigrating to this country soon after 1715. "Dr. Ned", was a brother of the Hon. Alexander Campbell M. D., one of the early settlers of Rockingham.

Edward Raymond, son of "Dr Ned" was born at Westminster, Feb. 23, 1790. He was a farmer and life-long resident of this town. He married Clarissa Chamberlain, November 22, 1810. She was born Feb. 5, 1788, and died in 1867.

The house where they were living burned and he erected the present brick dwelling on the farm known as the "Row Morse Farm". It was here that George was born May 2, 1818, and Daniel born March 8, 1820. The family moved to West Parish and bought a farm. On this farm Mary was born April 11, 1832. In all they had eleven children, some dying in infancy.



Daniel graduated from Vt. Medical College, Woodstock and from Berkshire Medical College. Pittsfield Mass in 1842. Dr. Daniel practiced his profession in Westminster West about 10 years and removed to Saxtons River.

Mary married Clark Lake of Saxtons River and went there to live.

George remained on the home farm and started the famous Campbell sheep farm. It was he, who went to Spain to purchase the Spanish Merino sheep, but found that the government would not allow them out of the country. Determined to fulfill his errand went to France where he purchased and brought back a highly developed breed of Spanish Merinos. He attained fame throughout the country, was noted as an authority on sheep breeding. His sheep were exhibited and won prizes in many parts of the country.

In 1874 he built the present spacious dwelling and in 1884 the enormous barn. He gave the old house to his sister, Mary Campbell Lake. She had it moved to Saxtons River in 1874 and placed on Grove St. where it now stands. Today it is owned and occupied by her grandson, Philip D. Simonds who is the son of Clara Lake Simonds.

George Campbell married Adeline Wilcox of Westminster West. To them were born;—Edward, married Lydia Ranney, moved to Comstock, N. Y.; Caroline, married C. Horace Hubbard, moved to Springfield, Vt.; Charles, married Mary Wardwell, moved to Montana; Frederick, married Emma Harlow, and remained on the homestead. He continued in the sheep business after his father's death, May 22, 1882, maintaining the high standards started by his father.

In 1918, due to failing health, he retired, selling all the sheep, and sold the farm to Will Taylor, who in 1919 resold to William Macy Walker of New York City. Mr. Walker moved the barn across the road where it now stands. He also removed all the wonderfully designed slate roofs and replaced with galvanized iron roofs. For several years after W. M. Walker's death, his son Isaac Henry Walker carried on the estate. In 1940 he sold it to Roy E. Parker of Winchester, Mass., the present owner.

The children of the late Fred and Emma Campbell are;—Harry, living in Montana; Frank, Melrose, Mass.; Helen, who died within a few years after her marriage to the late John Pid-dock of Saxtons River; Miss Mary, Boston; George, Buffalo, N. Y. Mrs. Lena Draper, Canton, Mass; and Edward, Melrose, Mass.



Homer Goodhue residence

### *Homer Goodhue*

Homer Goodhue, son of Dea. Ebenezer Goodhue, was born at Westminster West, March 4, 1811. As was the custom in those days he worked on his father's farm until he was twenty years of age. Then like most boys went out in the world to seek a career. He went to Charlestown, Mass., and was connected with McLean asylum for the insane for twenty-one years, the most of the time as supervisor. He returned to Westminster West in 1853.

In 1855 he was married to Miss Delyra Tuthill, of Westminster West. There is a story that goes with this marriage. Delyra and Homer were youthful sweethearts. When Homer departed to seek his career he promised Delyra that when he returned they would be married. Patiently she waited for him. Finally he came and after twenty three years the promise was fulfilled although Delyra was now a semi-invalid. He was a most devoted husband. Ed. Gorham has a silver loving cup, which Homer gave to Delyra in 1852. Her name and the date are engraved on the bottom side of the cup. When Delyra died it was given to Susie Gorham.

Homer Goodhue was town clerk and town treasurer several years; was elected town representative in 1863 and '65; was elected to the State Senate in 1866, and re-elected in 1867, and also held the office of county commissioner of the insane in 1866, and reappointed in 1867. In 1882 he was chosen one of the board of supervisors of the insane, whose duty it was to visit the hospital at Brattleboro every month.

He died June 1, 1896. He left his home to be used as the parsonage for the minister of the Westminster West Church. It was destroyed by fire in 1917, when three houses burned in the village one winters night. The present parsonage was erected upon the site.

**Sidney Gage***Gage*

William Penn Gage, a native of Charleston, Vermont, established the manufacture of Splint Ash and Oak Baskets at a site on the Morse Brook near the present residence of Mr. Will Cummings. Their first Baskets were made entirely by hand from hand pounded Black Ash. With the increase of business they found it necessary to move; therefore, they purchased the Granger Gristmill which is the present location of this Industry.

The main building, a three story workshop, was built in 1863. To this was added a two story structure which was originally built as a clothes pin factory for his son Walter Gage. The Flood of 1869 washed out the Walpole Bridge and Mr Gage purchased the timbers of this Bridge to use in building the present Logway and Binding Room. The houses and barns on the Gage Property were built by William P. Gage. The large house has thirty rooms and a small dancehall. Several of the workers at the Factory were boarded and roomed at this house and the Dancehall was the scene of many pleasant gatherings.



At the time of his death, in 1880, William Penn Gage had a steadily increasing business; with the Trademark GAGE well known for durability and quality; and the business referred to as "Largest Manufactures of Hand-Made Baskets in the United States." His son Sidney Gage, together with his daughter Ada Gage, purchased the business from the other Heirs and under their management the business continued to grow. There was a time when between 35 and 40 men were employed and night work was required to keep up with their orders. It is reported that Sidney Gage never considered that he was ready for the Fall business until he had at least five hundred dozen Bushel Baskets on hand. The Gage Basket Wagon, piled high with Baskets, on its regular trips to the Depot in Bellows Falls can be remembered by many. In addition to Baskets they also manufactured from time to time other wooden articles, such as: Freight Car Timbers; Railroad Ties; Chair Splint; and Paper Rolls for Paper Machines.

Mr. Sidney Gage was called upon at various times to serve in town offices. For thirty-five years he served as a Trustee of the Bellows Falls Savings Institution. In 1892 he was elected to represent Westminster at the General Assembly in Montpelier. Mr. Gage also found time for his favorite pastime, Music. From 1907 to 1922 he made 17 Violins and worked on a process for curing the wood used for them, a process which he reportedly later patented.

Mr. Sidney Gage passed away in 1923 at his home. His sister Miss Ada Gage and his wife Mrs. Ellen (Leonard) Gage continued to run the business. Miss Ada Gage died in 1936 and Mrs. Ellen Gage continued to run the Factory.

With the years the competition of cheaper Baskets increased but Mrs. Gage continued to maintain the usual standard of quality, despite the fact that the business was steadily decreasing. Shortly after her death in January, 1938 the property was purchased by Winifred Hosley of South Londonderry and was leased to and run by Cassius Wilson, formerly of Brattleboro.

To meet the present market demands it is now necessary that the cheaper Baskets be made. So in the year of 1942 the Gage Basket will celebrate 100 years of Business.





Gage's Mill



George A. Dascomb

*George A. Dascomb*

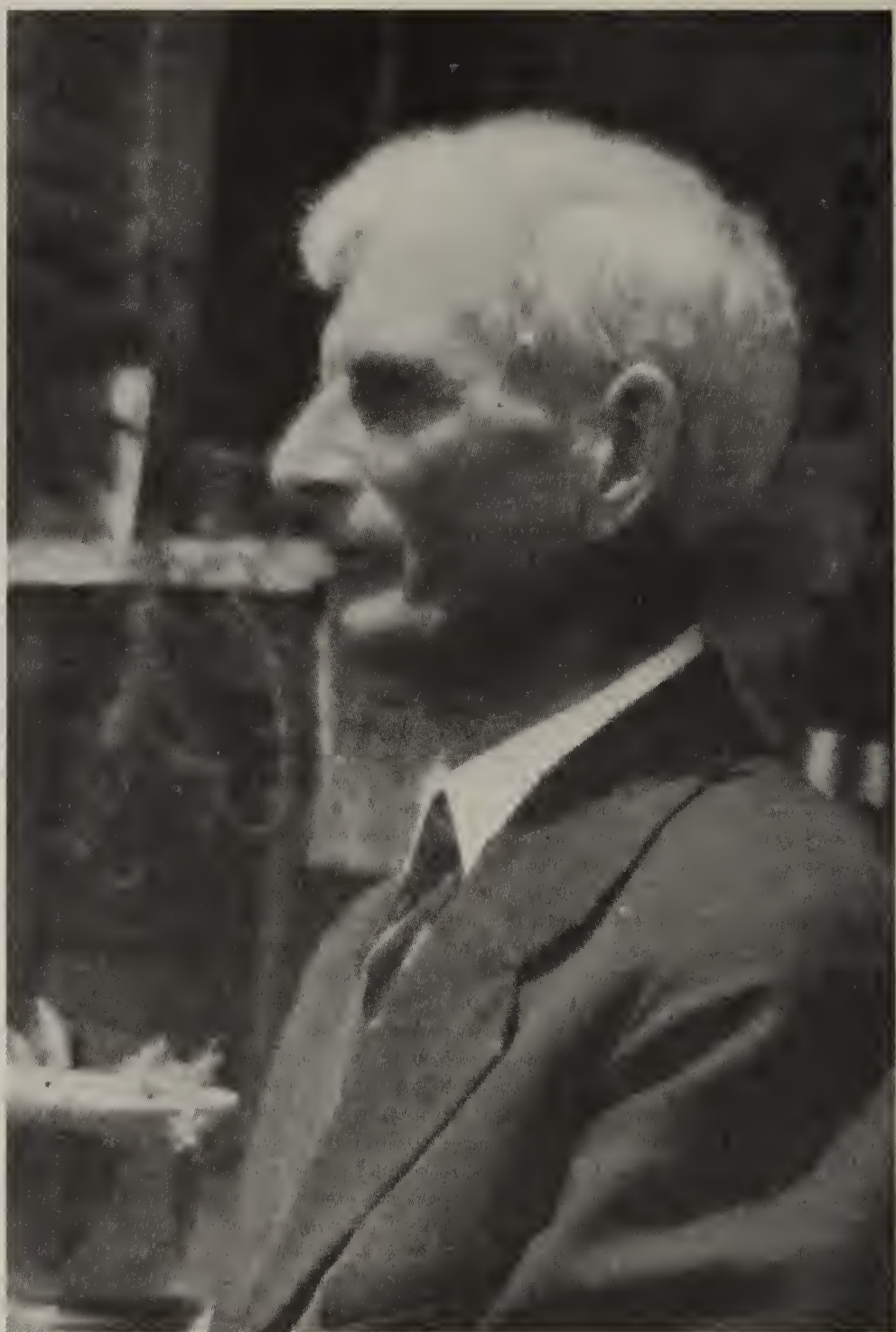
"Mr. George A. Dascomb lived many of his early years and later made his home in Westminster, Vt. He spent the busy and active middle years of his life in Texas, where he was for a generation engaged in the building and operating of several large lumber concerns, and where he was known to the southwestern lumber fraternity as a splendid citizen as well as a capable and successful business man. He was of a most retiring nature. He avoided the limelight with conspicuous success throughout his very active and constructive life; yet he left a vivid and indestructible impression of high character and unusual qualities of heart and mind upon all the world with which he associated himself. He was a philanthropist, a scholar, and a builder of the better things of life, in addition to his qualities as successful financier and business man.

Mr. Dascomb was born Oct. 1, 1861, at Waitsfield, Vt., a son of Rev. and Mrs. A. B. Dascomb. He lived for a time in Woodstock and was educated in the public schools of Winchester, Mass. For 11 years his father was pastor of the Congregational church at Bellows Falls with a home residence in Westminster. He started in the lumber business with the Booth Lumber Company at Burlington. For 25 years he was a partner in the Vaughan Lumber Company in San Antonio, Texas, and was president of the Vaughan Lumber Company of Houston as well as treasurer of the Dascomb-Daniels Lumber Company of Kansas City. He was also president of the Connecticut Valley Orchard Company of Westminster, vice-president of the Hildegrade Lumber Company of Chicago, and was interested in the wholesale and retail lumber business throughout the south and west.

But his long years of successful lumbering in the Southwest had never robbed him of his love for his old Vermont home, or stilled in his heart one of his greatest ambitions, namely, to return to Vermont and raise apples on a large scale, possibly to produce a perfect apple. He had gone back to Vermont and found what he considered an ideal location for an apple orchard at Westminster. He purchased the land and organized the Connecticut Valley Orchard Company to operate it. Gradually he began weaning himself away from the Southwest, and finally moved his home definitely to his apple orchard. Maintaining a permanent residence here, he made frequent business trips to Chicago and Texas.

In his old home territory he did many good works that endeared him to his neighbors. He built a lovely community house for Westminster. He was chairman of the trustees of the Butterfield Fund, a philanthropic organization, and a substantial contributor to other town organizations.

He died at the age of 73 happy in the rounding out of a most admirable and useful life."



Rollin H. Ranney



*Rollin H. Ranney*

Rollin Hayes Ranney was born February 9, 1878, at Westminster, Vt., the son of Rollin Wallace and Asenath Melvina (Caswell) Ranney. Like the rest of the Ranneys, he is the tall and stalwart type of man. True to Ranney nature is naturally thrifty, and by having developed along conservative lines through concientious thinking has become one of Westminsters most prosperous farmers.

He graduated at Kimball Union Academy in 1900 and in 1903 came to the West Parish and since that time has operated the Ranney farm which was cleared and settled by Elijah Ranney about 1771. This farm has since that date continuously been owned and occupied by a Ranney. Rollin H. is a great grandson of the original Elijah and he took the farm over from his uncle, Henry Porteus Ranney. This is the only farm in the West Parish that has carried the paternal name since it was cleared and settled.

The first house was the usual log house that was built when land was cleared. The second house was located on the site of the present. This house was taken down and the present one was built in 1848 by Henry Porteus Ranney.

On August 2, 1906, Rollin H. Ranney married Lora Wilcox, who is a descendant of the first families in town being the granddaughter of Roswell and Melinda (Tuthill) Wilcox. To them were born three sons, Arthur, who is in partnership with his father; Capt. Albert F. Ranney of the 45th Medical Battalion, 3rd Armored Division, located at Camp Polk, La.; and George, who owns and operates the late Wallace Ranney farm in the East Parish. (This being the farm where his father was born.)

Mr. Ranney, following in the footsteps of Deacon Elijah Ranney, became Junior Deacon of the West Parish Church in 1908 and upon the resignation of Alfred P. Ranney became Senior Deacon in January, 1926. The Ranneys have always been the backbone of the church and still are for the decision of the important matters of the village church depend upon the counsel and advice of Mr. Ranney.

Mr. Ranney was Selectman nine years, 1928-1937; school director, 1907-1927; represented Westminster at the State Legislature in 1935; President of Board of Directors, Windham County Co-op Milk Producers since 1931; and is the third member of the Windham County Selective Board.



*Martha Goodhue Miller*

*A Centenarian*

The people of Westminster have been happy in honoring the memory of Martha Goodhue Miller who lived in their midst for more than a century.

She was born December 1st, 1834, in Westminster West, on the Goodhue homestead which was situated on a road leading west from the late Campbell estate. The "Goodhue barn" is still standing with its hand-made wooden pegs holding the hewn timbers in place. Old northern spy apple trees and beds of blue myrtle keep the spirit of ancestral life.

Mrs. Miller lived to be one hundred and one years, eleven months and nine days old, but the memory of early life with its spinning, weaving and bleaching linen; its soap-making and candle-dipping; the brick oven and twig brooms; warming pans and foot-stoves; its strings of drying pumpkin and apple and bunches of healing herbs ever remained fresh in her mind.

About 1850 the Goodhue family removed to the village.

Martha Goodhue was the great grand-daughter of the Rev. Josiah Goodhue who was the first settled pastor in Putney, and her own father Dea. Ira Goodhue, the son of Dea. Ebenezer Goodhue, was a senior deacon in his church for about forty years.

Mrs. Miller was educated in the town schools, Chester, Thetford and Orford academies. She taught school in Westminster and Athens where she 'boarded round' among the parents of the school children. She received \$1.25 per week in pay. This was a munificent sum as her mother, Almira Sawyer of Heath, Mass., received only four shillings and three pence which was less than 67 cents per week. Later Mrs. Miller became a dressmaker, owning the first sewing machine in the parish.

On Nov. 24, 1859 (Thanksgiving day) she married Reuben Miller and went to live at "Maplewood" farm in the south part of town. She became the mother of nine children and all grew beyond the age of infancy which, in those days, was remarkable. Six of the children are now living, five of them in the home town.

In 1897 Mr. and Mrs. Miller left the farm and went to live in the Goodhue home in the village. This place was burned to the ground in 1917 and the house lot was deeded to the Westminster West Library association on which now stands a small but delightful library building to perpetuate the memory of this steadfast family.

Mrs. Miller spent the last years with her children in the east parish. She was a woman of great integrity with a broad and tolerant mind. She kept her interest in progressive affairs throughout her long and useful life. Work was her watchword and busy fingers made numberless knitted garments for the children of the family, even to the very last weeks of her life. Reading was her pastime and she kept abreast of current topics.

She outlived all her contemporaries and saw the wonderful changes brought about by the telephone, telegraph, railway, automobile, airplane and the many uses of electricity.

Mrs. Miller died Nov. 9th, 1936 after a very brief illness.

A sainted mother: an example of faith in christian fellowship to the many with whom she came into personal relationship.





**Bertha Miller Collins**



*Bertha Miller Collins*

A Vermont native, with Scotch-Irish and English ancestry, Mrs Collins' line of forbears lists distinguished professions in which writers and artists are significantly included. She was born in Westminster West in 1876 the daughter of Reuben and Martha Goodhue Miller, the eighth child in a family of nine.

Her rural school education was supplemented by private school attendance in Missouri, under tutelage of an aunt who was a Mt Holyoke alumnus. During a later period at Massachusetts Normal Art School, she majored in work under Cyrus E. Dallin, sculptor, and public school supervision, subsequently teaching drawing as a district supervisor for a number of years.

In 1909 she married Jerome W. Collins of Westminster and with him removed to the Connecticut Valley Orchard where she became her husbands secretary, and bookkeeper for the company. This task she relinquished after more than twenty years of continual service.

Owing to these many duties, art work was discontinued, but latent creative ability found an outlet in verse which has appeared in papers and magazines for some few years. Also there have been prose sketches and drama.

"In her poems one finds a deep appreciation of the innate loveliness of even the most common attributes of life. And through her phrases is woven the word color and imaginative detail possible only to the conception of a sincere artist."

*Music's Romance*

(Glose)

That little time with lyre and rhyme  
To while away forbidden things!  
My heart would feel to be a crime  
Unless it trembled with the strings. (Poe)

On sunny slope, this hour of noon,  
Sweet fragrance fell upon my head...

And time might speed away too soon'

This hour I boldly took and fled

To upland slope, whose trails I tread

In search of melodies sublime.

I listen to the fluting song

Of leaves; and drum of swifts. No wrong

In loving life a little time...

That little time with lyre and rhyme.

I caught a note, upon my lyre,  
That filled the still and scented breath  
Of noon-day hour. My heart beat higher  
Lying on the sun-warmed heath  
And making music ring beneath  
The leaves. A music fit for kings!  
And yet I steal away in fear  
To make these rhymes I hold so dear,  
And mock the woodland note, which rings  
To while away . . . forbidden things!

A crystal clear, on summer grass,  
And rippling waves near ebbing sea;  
The homing pigeons as they pass,  
And singing voice of bumble-bee  
Are strains of music made for me  
All these I gather, like a chime,  
Within my heart before the day  
Is past. These rhymes so gay!  
To miss this chance and fail to climb,  
My heart would feel to be a crime!

The symphony of life's own beat  
Is precious, strong to one who hears  
The undertones in swift retreat . . .  
Or pulsing sound that swells and nears  
O breathless Time! I hold my fears  
And let the forest nymph's blue wing  
Alight upon my eager hand . . .  
And pray that I may understand!  
My hope would not stay where it clings  
Unless it trembled with the strings!

BERTHA MILLER COLLINS



Edwin Gorham.

*Edwin Gorham*

On the morning of June 23, 1860, there came into this world a baby boy. Little did the parents realize that this child would, later in his life be an inspiration to those around him. At an early age it was discovered that this boy named Edwin Gorham was the owner of an exceptional voice.

His father David C. and mother, Jane (Wilcox) Gorham sent him to Vermont Academy, when this school opened its portals for the first time. He was active in the music and art groups and, while there, definitely decided on music and art as a career. He was a member of the class of '81.

In 1882, he went to Boston and studied at the Boston Art Museum, later at the Art League in New York City. At the same time he was developing his rich baritone voice, studying mostly with T. L. Cushman. He also went to Paris, France for further study.

Because of his father's illness, he came home and opened his first studio at Putney in 1888. In 1889, he returned to Boston and opened a Studio there. He not only taught, but continued to study and sing publicly. He first sang at Berkley Temple, where Rev. Charles Dickinson, a native of Westminster was the preacher. At the same time he was doing portrait work. The first portrait he did was of Rev. Alfred Stevens, which is the one that hangs in the Westminster West Church.

Many persons have benefited by having studied music with Ed Gorham. Being a true Yankee he didn't encourage a pupil to squander his money on voice training if it wasn't worthwhile. Some of those who received voice fundamentals, through the wise tutelage of this master, were inspired to continue with a musical career, and as a result have become some of America's outstanding singers.

Among his former pupils is Roy Cropper, a tenor, who became famous in light opera in the early 1920's. Gustafson, possessed of a wonderful bass voice, attained Metropolitan fame. Today, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the famous vocal teacher, Mildred Reed Sircon. Her soprano voice is heard each Sunday in one of Minneapolis' largest churches.

Another former pupil is Charles Boyd, now singing Tenor in Old South Church, Boston. Locally, is Cinda LaClair, director of the Kurn Hattin Band, which is known throughout New England as an outstanding school Band.



In 1932, he retired, and returned to his native Vermont, bringing among his treasured possessions, his Baby Grand piano, which he presented to the Community. It was placed in the Town Hall and is always used for any musical gatherings.

Although 81 years of age, he is still one of the most active citizens. He is preserving much valuable information of the history of the West Parish. At the Library, has been accomplished a hard but worthwhile task. In a number of large old fashioned albums, he has the photographs of the old residents of the town.

Westminster West is proud of her native son, Edwin Gorham, and prouder still because he came back.



Gorham Chest brought from Cape Cod by OX CART containing \$4,000 in gold. Painting of scene on chest by Edwin Gorham as his vision of his ancestors journey



**Dr. Seth Arnold**

*Dr. Seth Fenelon Arnold*

Seth Fenelon Arnold was born in Westminster, Vermont in 1878, the son of Fenelon and Emily Augusta (Marsh) Arnold. He began his education in old District No. 7 or the Sand Hill School. Attended a term at the village school and also attended Walpole High School. He graduated from Kimball Union Academy in 1896 and Vermont Academy in 1899. After which he studied at Rose Polytechnic Institute, Terre Haute, Indiana, for two and one half years. In 1902 he returned to Westminster and taught in the village school. In 1903 he was employed by the New England Telephone Co.

He entered Tufts Medical School in 1904. Since the completion of his course, graduating in 1908, he has been active in the practice of medicine. He was Physician with the American School Boys tour of Europe in 1913. Supervising Medical Examiner for the Royal Arcanum 14 years. Is Medical Examiner for the Lumberman & Associated Mutual Insurance Companies, and City of Boston-Law Department. Is a member of all Masonic bodies, Sigma Nu and Chi Phi Fraternities, B. P. O. Elks, Sons of American Revolution, University Club of Boston, Vermont Ass'n of Boston for 38 years, and many other social and fraternal organizations.

Like his ancestors he has been active in Civic service, being a member of the Republican City Committee of Boston for 25 years, a member of the Boston City Council for 5 terms and Massachusetts Legislature for 4 terms.

He is married and has two children; a son, Richard Fenelon Arnold, a senior at Harvard University and a daughter, Constance Arnold, a sophomore at Jackson College.



Margaret Wright Bent



*Margaret Wright Bent*

Margaret Wright Bent was born in Westminster, February 4, 1888, one of the eight children of George Craigin and Mabel Alice (Roberts) Wright. She attended Northfield Seminary. While there her dramatic abilities came into prominence. Looking back on her school day memories, writing plays and acting in plays are much more vivid than the knowledge gleaned from the routine subjects.

On November 16, 1916, she became the bride of Winthrop Bent of Watertown, Mass., and went to live in Maine. In 1917 they came to Westminster and rented the Frank Farr farm buying it in 1922.

Coming from a musical family, she is possessed of a lovely voice, and is always active in musical circles here and nearby towns. Through her music, her poetic talent has been developed by combining words with music into song. The words of two of her compositions appear in this book.

Her brothers and sisters have also been gifted musically. Many have attained prominence either vocally or by playing some musical instrument. All are living with exception of the late Sarah, wife of Paul G Harlow. They are, Martha, Mrs Frank Sawyer, Montpelier, Vt.; Mabel, Mrs. Charles Rosengren, Glenhead, L I.; Helen Elizabeth Wright, a nurse, Yonkers, N. Y.; Daniel, Springfield, Mass.; George, Wilkinsburg, P A.; and Hollis Springfield Vt.. All are direct descendants of Medad Wright, brother of the famous Capt. Azariah Wright.

Mrs Bent was the first woman postmistress of Westminster. She is today one of the active workers in community life, giving of her talents on all occasions.

*M. Elizabeth Minard*

Mary Elizabeth Minard was born March 27, 1910, in Westminster West, daughter of the late Seymour Henry and Elizabeth (Frazer) Minard.

She attended the village school in Westminster West and Sumner Ave. School in Springfield, Mass. Was graduated at Vermont Academy, Saxtons River in 1927 and from Miss Twichell's Private School, Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1929.

After spending one year in Social Service work as Assistant Managing Director of the Springfield Mass. Girls Club, she returned to Vermont and taught eight years in the rural schools in the towns of Grafton, Athens, and Westminster West.

In 1937 she attended Columbia Teachers College, New York City. She now conducts a private Kindergarten in Saxtons River. She also owns and operates the farm formerly owned by her father. This farm was originally owned by Frasier Goodell and was purchased by the Minards in 1897.

The Minards are direct descendants of Gov. William Bradford through Joshua Webb of Rockingham, who was a "Liberty Man" during the Revolution and took an active part in the formation of the state of Vermont. His great grand-daughter Caroline Webb married John Minard. Elizabeth, also the late John Putney Minard, and Oella Minard, who are the son and daughter of Charles Edward and Lucy (Taylor) Minard, (formerly of Milton, Mass. now of Westminster West), are the eleventh generation down from Governor Bradford.

They are also direct descendants of John Tuthill, who was chosen Town Clerk at the first Town meeting of Westminster, held March 15, 1784, of which any records have been preserved.

*The Triplets*

When Amenta, Belenda and CEMENTA were born  
Great excitement prevailed night, noon and morn,  
For girl-baby triplets had never been known  
From Vernon Chester or Westminster Town.

Then came the great problem of what they should call  
These wonderful triplets, beloved of all;  
In Bible and novels maids and matrons did pore  
Seeking names that never had been used before.

The Parson thru volumes of Latin, Sanscrit, and Greek,  
And e'en in mythology vainly did seek.  
On Sunday, when mid-day at last slowly came,  
The women convened the triplets to name.

At last when names for the babies were found  
(More heathen than Christian to most they did sound)  
People said the poor triplets surely can ne'er  
Live long with names so uncanny to bear.

But Amenta, Belenda, CEMENTA calmly passed  
From childhood to old age until at last,  
Though blessed with names thought so ill starred,  
They lie side by side in the old church yard.

EDWIN GORHAM.

NOTE:—They were born in 1811 the children of Zadock and Beulah Hitchcock. The graves are in the village cemetery, Westminster West.



**Three Young Fellows:** standing, Edwin Gorham, 81 years, Prescott Crowell, 79 years; seated, Henry Gorham 83 years. All were born in Westminster West



**Henry Porteus Ranney, born Jan. 1829—died May 1909**



# *Education*



Brookside School, Westminster West. The only red brick school house in town today and still in use

### *Schools*

The first school in town was taught by Joshua Webb in 1765. We do not know how many years he taught but, in 1777 he moved to Rockingham.

At one time there was a flourishing Academy in town located on or near the site of the present Westminster street school. According to Rev. Fairbanks' history, it was taught by John Goldsbury in 1849 and in 1850 to '51 it was under the care of Prof. L. F. Ward, and for two or three years after it passed through the hands of Mr. W. H. Coburn, Mr. Clark, Mr. John Stratton and Mr. Maynard.

In 1854, Prof. Ward again took charge of the school, under whose efficient management it gained great popularity, attracting scholars from various parts of New England. The number of pupils was a hundred and upwards, and sometimes it reached nearly 200 students, being referred to as the "Fayette Ward School".

Five catalogues were issued under Prof. Fayette Ward, and one State Institute catalogue. Mr. A. B. Dascomb took the school in 1858, and "did good service for some 3 years," after which time there were only occasional terms.

The town was divided into "school districts", in each district was built a school thus came into use the common expression "district school". At one time in the west part of the town were five school districts with a school open in each one. The one in the Holden district a wooden structure painted red had around ninety pupils. Now that section of the town is mostly cellar holes. District No. 1 South Valley brick school was burned and was replaced by the present building.

The two in West Parish today are, Village school in District No. 2, this is the second school built in said district, however, it is the first one at this location. The original brick school is "Collins Brick Garage" on the West Road. District No. 3, Brookside school, is the only brick school house in town in use. There is in existance, a book, which is believed to contain the first written records of this school. Each District had their own officers.

Following is an account of the first meeting taken from said book:—

“The inhabitation of the 3rd school District met agreeable to the notice and proseded to business as follows, 1st, chose Amos Hitchcock Moderator, 2nd, chose Reuben Prentiss clerk, 3rd, chose Amos Hitchcock, Henry Miller & Job Parkhurst committee, 4th, chose Ansel Moultroup collector, 5th, chose Reuben Prentiss to measure wood, 6th, voted that the annual meeting shall here after be holden on the first Wednesday of March, 7th, voted to reconsider the vote concerning wood which was taken at the meeting in September last, 8th, voted to get 1/8 of a cord of wood to each scholar that has attended the school the winter past, to be cut not more then 2 feet long and well split, and piled under the shed in the month of March next, 9th, voted that we have a school three months the winter ensuing, 10th, voted to appropriate twenty dollars of the money to be drawn from the town in 1836 for the next winter school, and raise the remander on the Polls of the scholars that attend the school, 11th, voted to adjourn the meeting with out Day.”

Westminster, Feb. 25th, 1835  
Reuben Prentiss, District Clerk.

No. of Scholars in District No. 3, March 1, 1835

Henry Miller	2	Amos Hitchcock	5
Job Parkhurst	3	Lydia Stiles	3
Buel Carpenter	3	Reuben Prentiss	5
Willard Darling	2	Polly Darling	1
Ansel Moulthrop	3	Asahel Goodell	3
Christopher Patch	1	Luther Bixby	2
Jared Goodell	2	Benjamin Phippen	1
Cyrus S. Barnes	1	Ira Carpenter	1
	—		—
	17		21
		Total	38

The last meeting entered is dated March 25, 1893, with John R. Hitchcock as District Clerk.



The original Gageville school house, located on Saxtons River St. was remodeled as a dwelling and is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jay Mandigo Sr.

Sand Hill school has nearly been washed off the map several times as it is located in the town's flood area, but being of a sturdy structure has "hung on" and is still serving the public.

Today there are 6 school houses in use, all have either Superior or Standard Plates over the entrances. There are 9 teachers employed with an enrollment of 219 pupils. Homer B. Ashland, of Bellows Falls, is the present Superintendent of the town.



Airplane view of Kurn Hattin Homes

## *The New England Kurn Hattin Homes*

### A Brief History

The New England Kurn Hattin Homes were started in 1893, by the Reverend Charles Dickinson, a native of Westminster. Dr. Dickinson was pastor of Berkeley Temple in Boston, Massachusetts, and a distinguished graduate of Harvard College. His wife, also, was a native of Westminster.

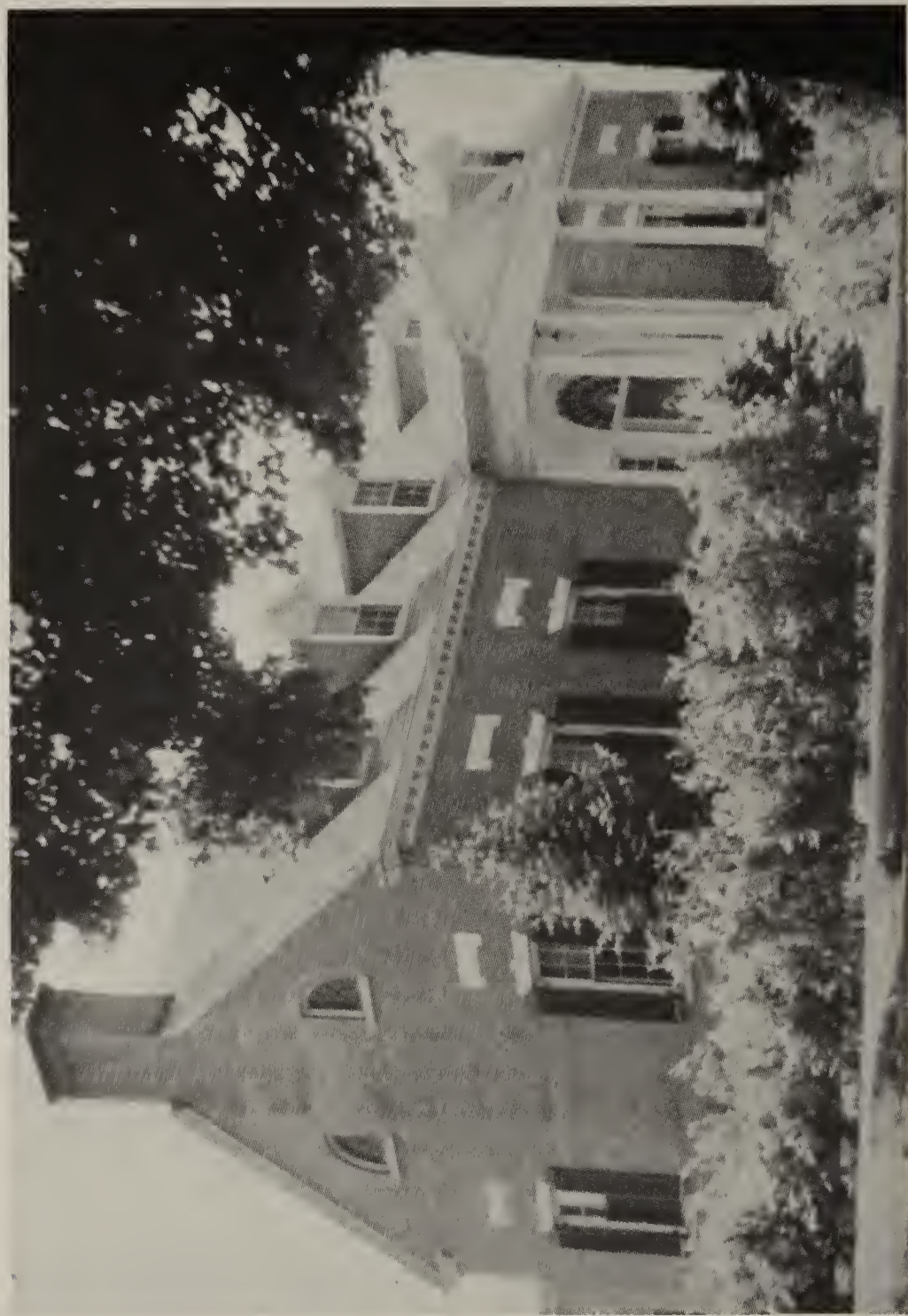
He had in the course of his ministry seen a great need for the kind of program that the homes are now furnishing. He saw no other organization attempting it. Lands and buildings were acquired from a former hotel company. He succeeded in interesting many of his parishioners in the project. He also interested some local people, particularly E. L. Walker of Bellows Falls, who served over twenty-five years as treasurer and left one-half of his property to the homes at his death. Other Vermonters very much interested in the project were the Honorable H. W. J. Van Patten, and the late Fletcher D. Proctor of Proctor. No other buildings were erected. However, later on the original building was burned and a new one was erected in its place, just about the time that a new schoolbuilding was being built. From then on the homes continued to grow and expand. At the present time there are three cottages for boys, a gymnasium, a Manual Arts Building, and commodious farm buildings. The homes also gradually acquired additional land until they owned something over five hundred acres in the town of Westminster.

They also operate a girls' department in Saxtons River in the town of Rockingham. The land and buildings for this project were bequeathed by Mrs Sarah J. Warner of Saxtons River.

The present trustees of the homes are as follows: The Honorable John E. Weeks, Middlebury, President; Mr. Major C Houghton, Brattleboro, Vice-President; Mr. Arthur J. Crockett, Boston, Mass., 2nd Vice-President; Mr. Walton H. Farr, Bellows Falls, Clerk and Asst. Treasurer; Mr. Robert C. Clark, Bellows Falls, Treasurer; Mr. Hardy A. Merrill Bellows Falls, Chairman of Executive Committee. Many other prominent people in the State of Vermont are greatly interested in the project and contribute much in the way of interest, time, and money to keep the homes going.

At the present time the homes care for ninety boys and forty-two girls. They employ a staff of twenty-five persons.





Westminster Library and Institute



*Westminster Library and Institute*

Many years ago a resident of Westminster by the name of Isaac Butterfield willed his money to the East Parish of Westminster (to become available after the death of his two sons) for the purpose of erecting a library building, the purchase of books, and a maintenance fund.

When the money became available it had devaluated to about one third of the original amount. Also building costs had tremendously increased during that time of waiting. Therefore, the funds were inadequate to meet the stipulations of the will and have a desirable or satisfactory building and equipment.

Realizing the situation Mr. George A. Dascomb, who was a chairman of the board of trustees, with rare thoughtfulness and generosity provided additional funds sufficient to build and maintain not only a library, but facilities which resulted in a beautiful and useful building which today is locally known and affectionately called the Library and Institute.

This Building was erected in 1923. Putnam & Chandler, of Boston, architects. It is a two and one half story Colonial with Flemish bond brick construction trimmed in white marble. The entrance portico is an architectural gem, of white Doric pillars, with lantern light, reached by an iron railed flight of steps.

The inside is finished in antique oak including hand carved panels over the fireplaces; legends honoring Mr. Dascomb's mother and Mr. Butterfield. The furniture is of the same dark oak.

In addition to the library which now has approximately 3,000 volumes, there is an all-purpose auditorium used as an audience room, gymnasium, and dining hall. A well equipped stage, ladies social room, men's lounge, clubrooms, historical room, a furnished kitchen, showers, etc.

Beautiful grounds surround the building which is centrally situated on the main highway and has a well equipped playground and a ball field.

The building is kept warm and lighted; always available to residents for any need and particularly all affairs of a social nature. It is in almost constant use and has become indispensable to the community which has learned to appreciate its value.

Legends:

In memory of  
STELLA NUTTING DASCOMB

A resident of this parish  
whose unselfish accom-  
plishments inspired the  
enlarged plans of this  
institution by her son  
George Alfred Dascomb.

Free Public Library  
The gift of  
Isaac Butterfield  
Former resident of the  
East Parish of Westminster.

### *Westminster West Wilcox Prizes Awarded*

(Taken from Brattleboro Reformer, June 21, 1918)

The fourth annual competitive exercises for the Wilcox fund prizes by the public school children was held in the town hall Friday afternoon. Being held in the afternoon this year made it possible for more to come from out of town. Many came by automobile from Saxtons River, Putney and Westminster.

The judges are chosen by the superintendent of schools and the two local teachers. Miss Florence Wellman, superintendent of Brattleboro schools, who had been announced as a judge, was unable to be present, so Miss Ethel Eddy, our superintendent, brought Miss Nellie Fenn, a Brattleboro teacher, for a judge. Miss Frost chose Miss Carrie Daggett of Gageville, who has taught many years in Massachusetts schools. The other judge chosen by Miss Bardwell was Mrs George H. Walker of Westminster.

This interesting event was made possible by the will of Edwin Wilcox, a native of Westminster West, who, besides other bequests to this town, left \$1,000 to the schools, the interest of \$500 each year to be divided as first and second prizes to the best readers and interest of the other \$500 to the best spellers, the exercises to be public and prizes awarded regardless of the ages of the pupils. The library association, which he also remembered, has the funds in charge.

The prizes this year were firsts \$13.47, and seconds \$6.73. The decision of the judges was announced by Mrs Walker and prizes presented to the children by the superintendent, Miss Ethel Eddy, as follows:

For reading—First, Elizabeth Minard, age 8 years, third grade; second, Harry Harlow, aged 14 years, eighth grade.

For spelling—First, Marion Benson, age 15 years, seventh grade; second, Doris Chapman, age 13 years, eighth grade. Elizabeth Minard was the youngest one taking part and the only one of grade three.

This was the first year that all prizes were awarded to genuine Westminster West children, all of whom have always lived here and never attended any other schools. Not only that, but they all have parents and grandparents who have attended the Westminster West schools.

After the exercises the Ladies' Aid society gave the children ice cream and cookies and sold to others, adding much to the enjoyment of the occasion. They cleared \$6 for their treasury.





Westminster West Library



## *Our Library*

(Westminster West)

The first library association was formed by Mrs. J. H. Clark, Mrs. A. P. Ranney, Mrs. E. B. Hall and Mrs. Harlan Goodhue in 1870. They called it the Ladies' Aid Society.

If the people paid a quarter to the Ladies' Aid Society, they could obtain books for a year and the women could come to the suppers and meetings of the Ladies' Aid Society.

The library was kept at Ellen Wilcox's house, which is where F. R. Chapman now has his store. It was moved from there to the Chandler house; the Chandler house is about a mile below the town opposite Walker's pond. It has been remodeled and is now owned by I. H. Walker.

Later it was moved back to the Wilcox house, and Mrs. Alfred Ranney was librarian. In 1880 it was moved to Nellie Houghton's house, and it remained there for nineteen years. It was moved to the parsonage in 1905. On January 19, 1908, it was incorporated.

The trustees were: President, Harlan Goodhue; Treasurer, Martha Miller; Secretary, Nellie Houghton; Trustee, Alfred Ranney.

In 1911 a joint will of the late Miss Ellen Wilcox and her brother, Edwin, formerly of this place, left the sum of \$2000 for the purchase of books.

The books that were kept at the parsonage were kept in a room furnished by the Ladies' Aid Society. They were at the parsonage until March, 1917, when it was destroyed by fire, as were the homes of the late Walter G. Harlow and Mrs. Martha Miller. Fourteen hundred books valued at \$2200, and the library furnishings, were destroyed in the fire. After the fire, Edwin Wilcox donated some money so that people did not have to pay to get books.

The books that were saved were kept at Nellie Houghton's until the fall of 1918. Mrs. Mary Harlow then took them and kept the library at her home. She kept it until 1936, when eleven hundred books had now accumulated and Mrs. Harlow had not more room. As a result, in 1936, a new library was constructed on a building lot given by Mrs. Martha Miller. The cost was \$1500. The fire insurance adjustments on books and furnishings were divided, two thirds of the sum being invested for a building and one third for books, thus making the new building possible. The library was insured for \$1200.

On Saturday, October 10, 1936, the library was dedicated. The dedication will stand out as an important event in the history of this parish, inasmuch as it was the fulfillment of a cherished dream dating from 1870 when the Ladies' Aid Society was formed. The Society's prime object was the building up of a good library. Dramas and fairs were held each year, netting substantial sums, until a legacy of \$1000, left by Homer Goodhue, made the work of the Ladies' Aid Society for that purpose unnecessary.

At the dedication, Rev. A. E. Gregg gave the invocation and a few introductory remarks. He then introduced Mrs. R. H. Ranney and Miss Nellie Houghton, who shared in giving an interesting history of the library's early beginnings, up to the present time. The guest speaker was George D. Aiken, who was then Lieutenant Governor of Vermont and now is Governor. He related the early history of Vermont. He stressed the self-reliance and resourcefulness of her people and compared past history with the present. The singing of America closed the program. The library gratefully acknowledged the gifts of tables, two chairs, pictures, one of which was given by I. H. Walker and showed the Ruins of Ancient Rome, a clock, lamps, a number of books and a gift of money. The library had in 1936 eleven hundred books and a few current magazines.

All visiting the library will appreciate the community album, a collection made by Edwin Gorham. These albums and other old documents including the diploma of Alfred Stevens from Dartmouth in 1839, are kept in an old secretary presented by Frank Miller.

There are now twelve hundred books at the library and several current magazines. About thirty-five books a year are purchased from interest on the money given by Mr. Wilcox.

NOTE:—Written by Otis Reed, when in grade 7 at the village school, and entered in The Windham County Historical Essay Contest. He received Second prize. This was in 1939. He is now a student at Vermont Academy, Saxtons River.

# *Churches*



Taken in 1901 before the church was raised to its present height



Congregational Church—East Parish



*East Parish Congregational Church*

This church was organized June 11, 1767, by a council consisting of representatives of the churches in Charlestown, Keene, Walpole, Westmoreland, and Winchester, New Hampshire; Northfield, and Warwick, Mass.; and Abington, Connecticut. Of the three hundred persons, or more, who then constituted the population of the town, only nine were found ready to be constituted a church, and singular to say, not one of these was a woman. These nine persons were Jesse Goodell, William Willard, Ephraim Ranney, Bildad Andros, John Sessions, Dan Dickinson, Zachariah Gilson, John French, Azariah Dickinson.

In 1769 a house of worship was raised, and during that and the following year it was so far advanced as to be capable of occupancy. It stood in the center of the highway, directly east of where the town hall now stands. For a long term of years it remained in an unfinished condition. There is no evidence that any action was taken to finish it until 1788. At that time the parish voted to receive the house from "the ancient Proprietors", on condition that they should pay all debts outstanding on its account, and execute a conveyance of all their title. A tax of ten pence on the pound, on the list of 1788, "payable in Beef, at twenty shillings per hundred, wheat at five shillings per bushel, and other grain equivalent, or money", was assessed for the purpose of finishing the house.

In the spring of 1789, a contract was made with Asa Gage to finish the house, for the sum of 175 pounds "lawful money, to be paid in wheat, at five shillings per bushel, beef at twenty shillings per hundred, or other grain or neat stock in that proportion;" and a tax of nine pence on the pound on the grand list was assessed, payable in such specific articles, for the purpose of meeting the contract. Mr. Gage completed his undertaking, but the parish failed to pay him at the appointed time, and he prosecuted his demand to judgment and execution, which caused the parish a good deal of annoyance and trouble.

The church celebrated its one hundredth anniversary on June 11, 1867. Rev. Pliny H. White preached the sermon and Rev. Alfred Stevens of the West Parish Church read a historical paper.

Within a few years after this occasion the church society built the present church and the old meeting house was used for a town hall. It was struck by lightning in 1888 and burned to the ground. In 1889, the present town hall was erected.

In 1902 the new church was raised up several feet making room for a vestry on the ground floor. Thus you see it today.



Westminster West Congregational Church

*Westminster West Congregational Church*

The Congregational church was organized October 31, 1799. The church was first known as the West Parish church. When the church was first organized there were only twenty members, ten males and ten females.

There was no regular preaching until the first pastor, Rev. Reuben Emerson was ordained and installed, February 18, 1800. The second pastor, Rev. Timothy Field, was installed in 1807. The third pastor, Rev. Jubille Wellman, was installed March 6, 1838. The fifth pastor, Rev. Alfred Stevens, commenced his labors with the church April 20, 1842, and was ordained February 22, 1843.

The 100th anniversary of the church was held on February 22, 1899. At that time Rev. Henry Goodhue was pastor. Since Mr. Goodhue left in 190<sup>2</sup>, there have been the following six pastors, Rev. Edward Fisher, Rev. Rollin Chafee, Rev. Daniel MacIntire, Rev. Walter Curtis, Rev. Wesley Page, and Rev. Arthur Gregg. Mr. Gregg is the present pastor.

The first deacons were Edward Goodell and Elijah Ira Goodhue. They were deacons from 1835-1871. Our present deacons, Rollin H. Ranney and Walter Buxton are descendants of Ephraim Ranney, first deacon of the East Parish Church.

The Sunday school was formed in 1816. Money was given by William Hall for a library.

The date of the first meeting house is unknown. It was standing in 1792, and open for meetings. The meeting house was a two story building. It was painted white and had no steeple. The pews had high backs and were square. There was a gallery on three sides filled with people every Sunday. The pulpit was quite high. In front of it was a deacon's seat which was occupied every Sabbath by the deacons. This building was burned January 11, 1829. The present building was erected and dedicated within a year. The pews faced the door. The pulpit was reached by stairs on both sides and was without a carpet. Behind the preacher's resting place were the singers. At one time they had a bass violin and a flute. There was always good singing.

From time to time the church has been remodeled and re-decorated. From 1874-1876, it was raised and the sermon could be preached in the upper story and a kitchen and vestry were built downstairs. The walls were neatly frescoed. New pews were put in. A carpet was put down on the floor. A new pulpit was built. The seats for the singers were moved to the left.



The colored glass windows that are in the church now were put in in 1896. On each window the names of those who gave the money for that particular window are given.

If you wish to visit the Westminster West village church you will find it on a hill overlooking the village. Every Sunday morning at 9:30 the bell rings out the first call to service. The parishioners all come in cars rather than with horses although the old horse sheds still remain in good condition. At eleven o'clock the last bell rings out to all a welcome to join in the services.

NOTE:—The research and writing of this article was done by Margaret Barnes, daughter of A. C. and Mabel (Nichols) Barnes, in connection with her school work at the village school, in 1939. She was eleven years old. This fall she will enter the eighth grade.

The present pastor is Rev. Sydney Byrnè. He came to the church in July, 1940 and was ordained in the early fall.

### *When Martha Sang*

A Sunday morning, late in June  
The windows of the white church on the hill  
Let in the robins merry tune  
And scent of clover bloom the air doth fill.

The full voiced choir an anthem sing  
And then a single voice is heard  
A voice that through the church doth ring  
As free and clear as any bird.

With mellow fullness of a flute  
The high sweet voice floats smoothly on  
The very singing birds are mute  
Till her last lingering note is gone.

Sweet singer of that bygone day  
I seem to see her standing there  
The wild rose color of her cheek  
The silky smoothness of her hair

And one who listened in that throng  
In after years oft said to me  
That lovely voice upraised in song  
Would e'er a fragrant memory be.

EDWIN GORHAM.

NOTE:—Martha Wright lived in the East Parish. She was possessed of a very lovely voice and would oftentimes come over to the West Parish and assist the choir.



*The Choirmaster's Dilemma*

While Stillman was yet in his prime  
And led the village choir right well  
He strove for perfect tune and time  
Ne'er dreamed his singers might rebel.

But Stillman's tireless zeal offended  
Some temperamental treble or disgruntled bass  
The trouble grew until it ended  
In a plan to defy him to his face.

One eve as Stillman sat at rest  
Before his vine clad cottage door  
A friend came to him fearing lest  
He might not hear what was in store.

"Some of your choir have slyly planned  
On Sunday, when you bid them rise  
To do so, and there silent stand  
To take delight in your surprise."

Sadly to the parson's home went he  
To find whatever could be done  
When singers planned to silent be  
Who should be singing every one.

The parson heard the tale of woe  
That Stillman to him had to bring  
Then smiled and bade him homeward go  
Sure that on Sunday they would sing.

When the day came the choir was there  
All smiles and in their Sunday best.  
Poor Stillman tried a smile to wear  
But anxious waited for the test.

When the first hymn was given out  
The singers stared in deep amaze  
The words they heard without a doubt  
Were not forgot for many days.

"Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God  
But children of the Heavenly King should sound His  
praise abroad."

When Stillman signalled the choir to sing  
A mighty burst of song poured out  
Which made the walls of the old church ring  
All thought of trouble put to rout.

EDWIN GORHAM.

## *Industries*



**1904, Jerome Holden with a pure Shropshire Buck purchased in Canada**

*Sheep Industry of Westminster West*

At one time Westminster West was one of the largest sheep raising towns in Windham County. At the peak of the sheep industry the number of sheep on a farm were anywhere from 50 to 1700. Few were the farms where that familiar 'baaa' could not be heard.

The reason for so many sheep was that the wool market was very good, as much as 55c a pound was paid. Now the price is 25-32c per pound.

The kind of sheep raised in this town were practically all wool sheep although some sheep were killed for family meat. The Spanish Merinos which produced very fine wool were the best type of sheep for this purpose. It was not until 1657 when Mr. George Campbell went to Spain to buy the Spanish Merinos that were introduced into sheep raising of this town. Mr. George Campbell went to Spain to buy a large herd of Spanish Merinos to be shipped to this village. The shipment was ready to start on its long journey when it was found that the government controlled the Merino breed and would not let any sheep be taken out of the country. So Mr. Campbell, not to fail in bringing back a shipment of these fine grade of sheep, went straight to France where he bought the same grade of sheep only more advanced. Thus he came home with a good flock of breeders to be distributed among the various sheep farmers.

The market for the wool was of course in the textile cities and towns. But in order to get a high price for their wool Mr. George Campbell bought up from all the sheep raisers their spring shearing of wool. But, while he was trying to sell the wool which was about 10 tons, enough to fill an enormous barn, those destructive creatures known as moths took possession of this great heap of food for themselves and ruined every last strand of wool.

Also Mr. Harry Kimball did the same thing, but his rotted which is very much the same. The price that these two men paid was 55c per pound which gave to the farmer as much as \$1000 a year.

The market for meat was not large enough to be hardly mentioned. The family of the sheep raiser devoured the few butchered sheep. Sometimes a quarter or a half was sold to a family or persons not owning sheep or those not wishing to kill their own. The sheep eaten were the old type, Cheviot, Shopshire, etc. The Merinos were too valuable to be eaten.



When the sheep industry was being introduced into Australia, Mr. Campbell sold for \$1500 a fine ewe, which was shipped to that country to be used for breeding purposes.

You may wonder why, when you drive through Westminster West, there are no sheep in view. There are still some sheep in Westminster West, but are very few compared with yesteryears. Only two farms have enough sheep to be called a flock. The reason for this large decrease was the northeasterners could not compete with the westerners. The westerners could raise more sheep at lower cost because of the many acres of land good for nothing but sheep. The farmers in Westminster West could not afford to compete with the westerners. So they changed over and put to other use the land originally used for sheep grazing.

NOTE:—Written by Richard Goodrich at the age of 13, when he was a member of the eighth grade in the Westminster West village school in 1939. This essay was entered in the Windham County Historical Essay Contest of that year and was awarded first prize in the elementary school group. Goodrich has just completed his second year at Vermont Academy, Saxtons River.



**They are still at it. Lynn Fullam and Charlie Hitchcock gathering sap in 1906**





Twin Falls—At the Forest—Gageville

*“The Forest”*

At Gageville, North Westminster.

Considerable history is attached to this rocky gorge. Once here was a paper mill that was destroyed by fire. A little later a large Woolen mill was built, that employed eighty hands. After some years that was destroyed by fire.

After a few years more an electric Power plant was built that furnished power to run the Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Street Railroad.

A few rods down below this rocky gorge a large tannery was operated for many years.

A few more rods further a saw mill and box shop was operated until moved to a new location and is now being used for making boxes and other supplies.



**What is left of the Old Dam—Gageville**



**The Forest—below the Dam—Gageville**





Log piles 15 to 20 ft. deep at Gage's Mill, 1900



**Log running on the Connecticut River at Westminster. Note the two boys swimming (black and white)**



**Walker Store before grain room was added. Ernest Gould on order wagon, drawn by Old Sam**



*Today In Westminster*

Westminster is outstanding as an agricultural center in Windham county. Its fertile meadows along the Connecticut river produce abundantly. Large acreages of tobacco have been harvested in the past, but in recent years have given way to market gardening. Roadside stands have sprung up all along the Old King's Highway. The Log Cabin Market is the first that one passes after leaving Bellows Falls. It is owned and operated by Paul Harlow, the present town representative to State Legislature. He not only retails but wholesales his vegetables. He is a graduate of Amherst Agricultural College (now Massachusetts State College). He also maintains a dairy of 20 cows thus enabling him to carry out a well balanced program.

On upper street is located the Green Mountain Produce Stand run by Fred Nelson and Jacob Yanizyn. They not only raise produce but buy maple syrup, apples and other foodstuffs from the local farmers and resell. At night the brightly lighted stand is seen for some distance up and down the highway.

Fenn Bros, have a Stand, specializing in Green Mountain potatoes. Warren Potter, a retired high school teacher from Springfield, Mass., owns and operates a good size farm on the Upper Street as well as one of the village street farms specializing in dairying. He has the largest Ayrshire herd in town.

The Watkins Bros. specialize in poultry and have a large herd of Jersey cattle. They run a milk and cream route and supply many of the stores in Bellows Falls with their products. Winthrop Bent owner of "Under the Hill Farm" south of the village raises Hubbard New Hampshire Red hens on a large scale and ships several hundred pounds of milk a day to the Bellows Falls Creamery.

"Lawn Meadow Farm" owned by Town clerk, Lynn Fullam is located in Westminster village. His herd consists principally of Jerseys. He also does general farming emphasizing potatoes as one of his outstanding crops. He also operates "Sweet Wood" the old Fullam Homestead.

George Ranney, now owner of the late Wallace Ranney farm is the third generation to operate this farm as it was originally bought and run by his grandfather. Like his father and brother he is specializing in dairying with a fine herd of Jerseys.

There are countless other farms in town, big and small, where general farming is carried on. Some of these farms have remained in the same family for generations. Also here and there we find a farm, where, the old folks have passed on and the present owners are not interested in keeping the land under cultivation. These farms are simply reverting back to nature. The day is coming when these owners will wake up and realize what they have lost.

The Pine Banks section is made up mostly of farmers of Polish descent. True to Polish nature the whole family work in the fields. As one farm after another comes into view riding along the roads, the result of many hours of labor is shown by the well kept fields of these hardworking people. The school Board have shown good judgement in having in the Pine Banks school a teacher of Polish descent and who can converse in the mother tongue, resulting in a stronger tie between the home and school.

Most of the farmers in the East Parish sell their milk to the Bellows Falls Creamery. In the West Parish the majority ship to the Windham County Farmers Co-op Milk Plant, located in Brattleboro. The farmers in the northern part of the West Parish ship to Bellows Falls. In order to sell to either one of these milk plants one must be a stockholder. In North Westminster there are few farmers who ship milk and R. J. Cowing peddles in Bellows Falls. He is just completing a new barn to house his dairy being located near Sabins' Bridge. R. E. Bradley and Norman Wright living on Kimball Hill road retail milk in Saxtons River and Bellows Falls.



**A group of registered Jerseys owned by R. H. Ranney and Son**

Rollin H. Ranney and Son have the outstanding dairy in the West Parish. They own a herd of eighty-four Jerseys, many being registered purebreds of high quality. They are the owners of Sybil's Quechee 338755, which is at the present time the highest living Superior Sire in the United States for the conformation of his daughters. His picture was in the October, 1940, issue of the Jersey Bulletin.

Harlan Barnes and son Joseph (one of the present Road Commissioners) own and operate several farms located in the northern part of the parish.

West Parish used to be outstanding for its sheep raising. The hilly pastures were excellent for grazing. The competition brought about in the western part of our country made the income inadequate, consequently other uses were made of the farms. Because of the type of farms and in order to have steady incomes many resources were developed. The farmers began to conserve the maple trees and the majority built sugar houses. The one on the M. E. Minard farm, bears the date 1882 and is still in use although the equipment has been modernized. Hugh Goodell, Charles Hitchcock, A. C. and Guy Barnes, Charles E. Minard, Harlan Barnes and Son, Elizabeth Minard, and Lynn Fullam, who operates Miss Jennie Burnetts sugar orchard, each put on the market several hundred gallons of maple syrup every year, while others make enough for themselves and sell between 50 and 100 gallons.

About the time of the Civil War young apple orchards were started on the Frasier Goodell and Charles Goodell farms, and other farms in the community. These two are mentioned principally because they are still in production, whereas practically all of the others have died out. Such of the old varieties of Northern Spy, Baldwin, Porters, Bell Flowers, Blue Parmain were planted. When Seymour Minard and Hugh Goodell took over the respective farms they enlarged and increased the orchards, planting more trees, especially MacIntosh, which is the popular variety today. At one time Hugh Goodell's orchard was the largest producing in this section of Windham County. At the present time it is operated by his son, Richard Washburn Goodell.

In the East Parish, outside of the C. V. O., Miss Sarah Davenport, a retired schoolteacher, and George Ranney own the largest orchards. The George Ranney orchard was started by the late Wallace Ranney. Both of these orchards are comparatively young and as time goes on will increase in production.





**Registered Cheviots on the Charles E. Minard farm. Mr. Minard standing in the background**

Charles Holton and Ralph Potter of the East Parish, and F. Sidney Clark of the West Parish do a good sized business in raising and selling potatoes.

The sheep raising industry is being revived in the West Parish, as Harlan Barnes has a small flock of Hampshires and Dorsets, Hugh Goodell has a flock of about 80 Shropshires. Also the Gorhams and Willie Reed have Shropshires. Charles E. Minard has 55 Cheviots, many of which are registered purebreds. Roland Belknap of Bellows Falls in partnership with Bill Spicer of North Westminster own a flock of 146 Dorset and Shropshires which are pastured in the West Parish. Fred Wright, living on the old Wright Homestead in the East Parish also owns a small flock of Shropshires.

George Woods and Elmore Kathan both starting on a small scale are developing their businesses as Landscape Gardeners. George Wood, located on Upper Street on the former Lewis farm, has a large greenhouse raising a variety of outstanding species of plants. Elmore Kathan has recently started his business and is located on the village street. Besides flowers, he raises fresh vegetables and peddles them in the nearby communities.

On the famous old Campbell sheep farm there is not one sheep, but, the hillsides are dotted here and there with Black Aberdeen Angus as Roy E. Parker, the present owner has a herd of this beef breed. For many years this exceptional farm has not been under cultivation. Mr. Parker, having bought this estate in 1940 is attempting to "bring it back" with the aid of modern mechanized farm machinery.

Like many other communities, one generation develops the farm, the next depletes, the next puts it under cultivation again, and so it will go year after year. Maybe fifty years from now the most productive farms today will have been depleted and be waiting for the next generation to "bring it back". Thus history will repeat itself as the generations of people come and go.

### *Williams Bros.*

In the spring of 1916, Alonzo S. Lewis and Carroll E. Williams founded the partnership of "Lewis and Williams" for the purpose of raising vegetables and selling same largely from house to house. The following year they started to wholesale to the stores, Hotels and Restaurants. After three years Lewis and Williams dissolved partnership and Lester A. Williams joined in what has since been known as "Williams Bros." for the purpose of raising and selling vegetables wholesale.

In 1923 they built the first Green-house later adding a smaller plant house. About that time they started making semi-weekly trips to Boston for the purchase of such stuff they needed, to give their customers a full variety of articles at all times. These trips have carried on since then without a break.

They now till about fifty acres and operate four trucks calling on well over one hundred customers twice weekly.

In the winter months the help numbers about eight, but in the summer months the number increases to about fifteen to eighteen men and boys with now and then more boys for weeding.

Their aim is first class service with best merchandise that money can buy.



**Fenn Bros.' new barns on Upper Street**



*W. S. Fenn Company*

On October first 1910, W. S. Fenn started a milk route with milk supplied by twelve cows. The milk was put into cans which were taken to Bellows Falls, by means of a one horse wagon. Customers had their milk measured from cans in a quart measure at their doorsteps. This manner of peddling was followed until 1914.

In 1914 it became necessary to use glass bottles exclusively. Transportation at this point was by means of a Model T Ford chassis on which was an express body.

A hand bottler was purchased in 1915. It filled four milk bottles at a time. Capping bottles was done by hand. One necessary element in milk or creamery rooms is proper Sterilization of all milk equipment so in 1913 steam was put into the Fenn Milk Room. Up to the present time the Fenn Company have found no better method of Sterilization.

In 1928, Mechanical Refrigeration was installed in the School St. milk room, also the following year a Pasteurizer was tried out. Apparently the public were not yet ready to adopt the use of pasteurized milk, so, until 1939 very little Pasteurized milk was made. In 1939 the demand became so great that a new Pasteurizer was installed in the new milk plant on the Bellows Falls road.

About one hundred cows are being milked and cared for in a modernly equipped barn located on Upper Street. By the use of a new mechanical bottler and capper the milk is put up without the touch of human hands until it is put into the cases.

At the present date two milk trucks are used to peddle this healthy food and is delivered in Walpole and No. Walpole, N. H., Bellows Falls, Rockingham, Saxtons River and Westminster areas. Today the public demands pasteurized milk so except for special orders of raw milk, all milk sold is pasteurized.

Since the death of W. S. Fenn the business has been carried on by his two sons, Howard P. and Fred S. Fenn.



A section of the orchards showing the buildings in the background

### *Connecticut Valley Orchard*

The Connecticut Valley Orchard, located in the so-called "Rocky Hill" district was organized in November 1911.

The C. C. and C. A. Peck farms with the E. G. Tuthill farm were bought and operations immediately began. About 20 acres were set to trees in the spring of 1912.

More land was acquired and prepared until there were 135 acres set to trees in this area. Later, in 1930-31, about 28 acres in the village of Westminster were utilized for trees making a total of 163 acres of orchard with approximately 8,000 trees.

The first real crop of apples was picked in 1917. Since then there has been a constant though irregular increase in production up to 1937 when the sales amounted to 53,105 bushels.

The total production to date has been 498,342 bushels of apples actually sold. Of this amount 342,637 bushels have been of the McIntosh variety. No apples used for cider, stock-feed or discards are reckoned into this figure.

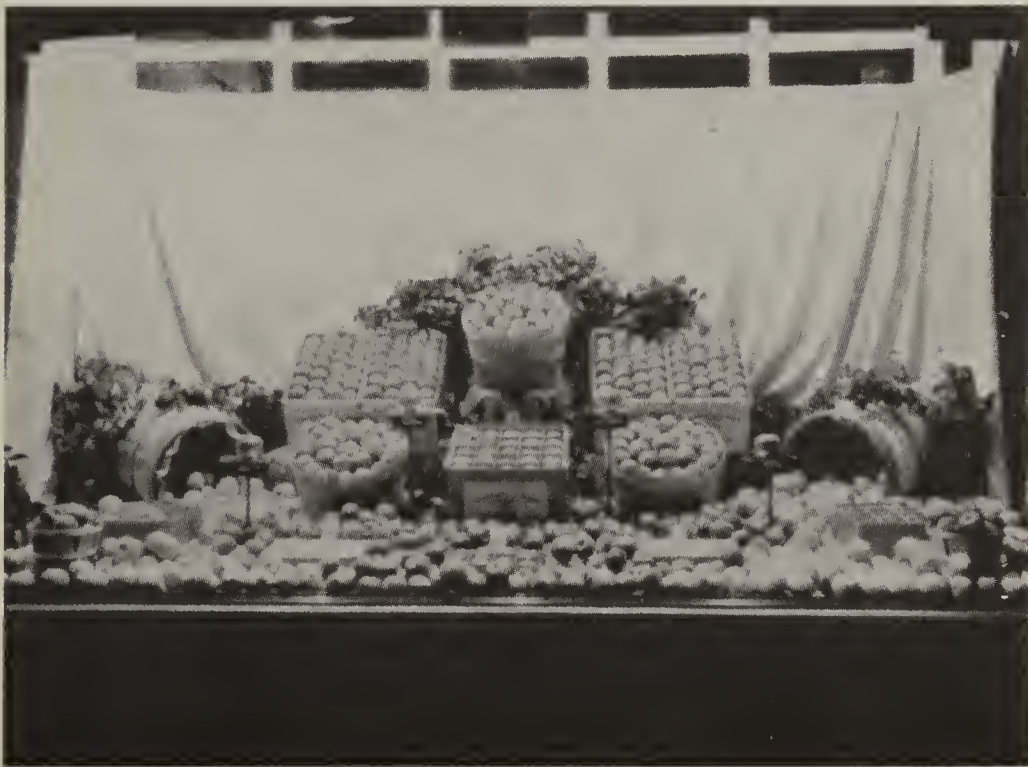
The greater majority of apples have been sold in New York city, beginning in 1920. Next to New York the largest amounts have been distributed to stores in a number of Vermont and New

Hampshire towns in the Connecticut river valley. This distribution was begun in 1926 and has continued with Mr. A. H. Bemis as salesman.

While the business is conducted on a wholesale basis, apples have always been made available to the consumer in nearly any quantity or kind of package desired, including gift packages for the holiday trade.

Improvements: The first winter and summer the dwellings on the place were repaired and equipped with modern conveniences.

All wells and springs failed during the dry summers of 1912-13 and the next year an artesian well was put down, and a 10,000 gallon storage tank built, which has since supplied all the buildings on the place. About 3,000 feet of pipe was laid for this purpose. Large amounts of water being necessary for spraying operations a dam was built on a small brook and a reservoir



Farmers Week in Bellows Falls. Display of the C. V. O.



created which supplies water by gravity to the four loading stations in the hill orchard. Approximately a total of 275,000 gallons is used each year.

Storage and packing facilities became necessary and a building was erected in 1920. This called for the installation of electricity and a line was built connecting at Kurn Hattin Home, thus making electricity available to the storage plant and all other buildings on the hill.

More storage was needed. An addition was built in 1928 and a refrigerating system installed. This eventually became inadequate and another addition, with more refrigeration machinery, was built in 1937. There is at the present time refrigerated space for 55,000 bushels of apples.

Personnel: The company was organized by Mr. George A. Dascomb who has, at all times, been the principle owner.

In recent years about twelve men are constantly employed with extra help required in thinning, harvesting and packing seasons.

The employees of continued service are, J. W. Collins, 29 years; S. M. Fullam, 25 years; George Vaine, 18 years; A. H. Bemis, 17 years; F. H. Parker, 12 years; G. L. Clark, 12 years.

Since Mr. Dascombs death, in 1934, the Connecticut Valley Orchard has been operated as a corporation.



Close up of Buildings



**Tanking up at one of the water stations**



**“One Caterpillar after another”. This modern equipment is combating insect destroyers of the fruit**



**Cross-section of the Conn. Valley Orchards**





1938—Tom and Jerry, the faithful pair with their master, Charles Hitchcock. Charlie always has, and still, uses only



*Basin Farm*

The Basin Farm is located in North Westminster. It is rightly called by this name for this outstanding farm is flat like the bottom of a basin with terraces rising around it enclosing it like the sides of basin. The soil is rich and very productive. The Saxtons River runs through furnishing a good supply of water. This excellent farm is owned and operated by Mrs. W. E. Pierce. She specializes in Holsteins, owning a herd of one hundred registered cattle, of this breed.



Blake and Higgins Paper Mill located at mouth of Saxtons river in Westminster

*Other Industries*

North Westminster is not exactly a farming community, the majority of the people living here are employed in other towns. As people adapt themselves to the natural resources, so have small industries sprung here and there. The Saxton's River passing through this section serves as a source of water power. At the mouth of this river is located the Blake and Higgins Paper Mill. George Pierce owns and operates a Box Shop and makes all kinds of wooden boxes, both large and small. He constructs and sells large numbers of apple and vegetable boxes.

Henry K. Brown has a place of business on Church Ave. He is a Cabinet Maker. He specializes in windows and frames. Because of the high quality of his work, customers come many miles, to have him do their work.

R. J. Cowing besides dairying, operates a saw mill and specializes in Maple Craft.



Gay's Express  
Showing building remodeled from old car barns, Gageville



**Gay's Express—Truck Yard, Gageville**

*“Gay's Express”*

Was started at Gageville North Westminster August 1928 and in 1934 Gay's Express was incorporated. At that time was operating fourteen large trucks.

Some time later this terminal and equipment was connected with S. B. Mannings of White River Junction. This local terminal now employs sixty truck drivers, 24 office hands and 10 repair men. Twenty four night transfer men that transfer about 300 tons each night.

This Company in connection with other terminals operate 146 power units, 48 trailer trucks and has a pay roll of \$345,000 per year and pays the State Department more than \$25,000 for motor vehicle registrations. More than any other Company or person in the State. This Company carries insurance on the freight and has terminals in

Albany, N. Y.

Barre, Vt.

Bennington, Vt.

Boston, Mass.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Burlington, Vt.

Manchester, N. H.

Rutland, Vt.

Springfield, Mass

St Johnsbury, Vt.

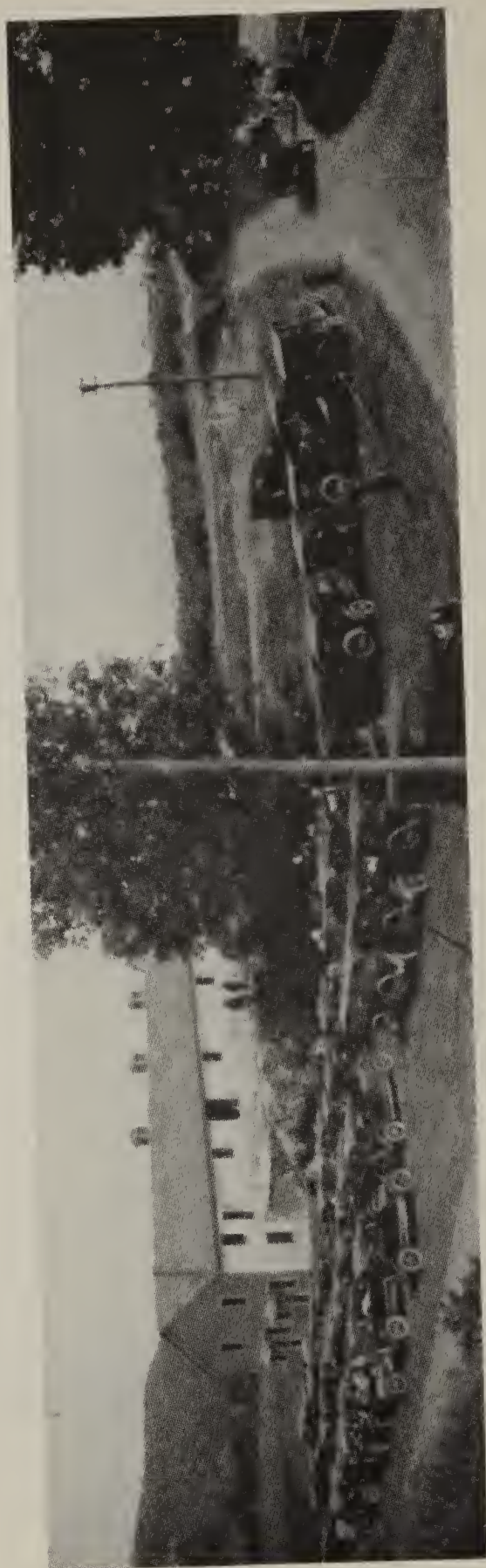
Worcester, Mass.

White River Jct, Vt.

Bellows Falls, Vt.

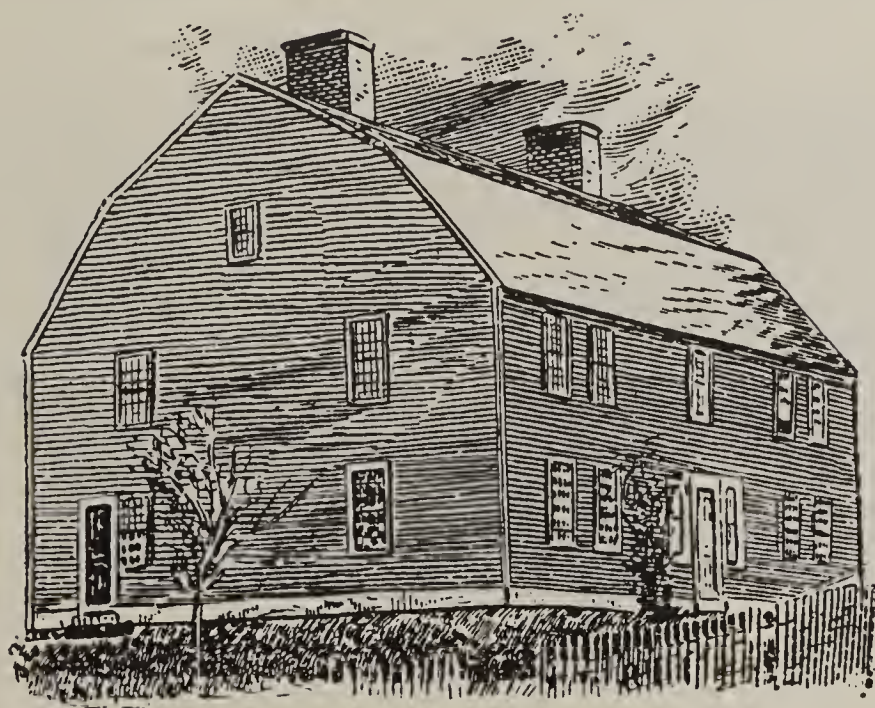
The building was originally the car barn of the Old Saxtons River street Railway.





County Day at the Connecticut Valley Orchard

*Here and There*



THE OLD TAVERN.



**Fourth of July dinner at Joe Ranney's—Westminster West**

Left to right, back row, Walter Buxton, Gustie Ranney, Frank Harlow Sr., Nancy Ranney, Charlie Ranney, Walter Holden, Alvira Smith, Delia Ranney Hall, Deacon A. P. Ranney and Mrs. Ranney, Charlotte Miller Harlow, Mrs. Henry Goodhue, Henry Goodhue, Stella Stoddard Ranney (widow of Geo.), Mr. Gove; second row, Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ranney, Mary Braley, Mr. and Mrs. Cutting, Mary Ranney Buxton, Mr. and Mrs. Ebenezer Ranney, Miss Gove; front row on ground, Ella Ranney, Paul G. Harlow, Belle Ranney, Emily Harrison, young Henry Ranney, Florence Metcalf, Blanche Ranney, Joe Ranney, Lizzie Ranney, Ira Miller, Bertha Miller Collins, Miss Gove.





Mr. Converse and "The Lady"



1902—Charlie H. goes 'a courting'



The Horseless Buggy comes to Town



Home of Henry and Ed Gorham. Built in 1782. Henry greets Preston Crowell's son

*The Gorham House*

The Gorham house was built in 1782 by Ephraim Wilcox, who with his family came to Westminster from Cape Cod about the same time as the Ranneys and other families. Mr. Wilcox bought the farm in the West Parish owned by a Mr. Wells, who evidently had cleared the acreage suitable for cultivation. The family lived in a log cabin till the house now standing was built.

That same year their youngest son Lumon was born. When he became of age he married Libeah Howard. Their youngest daughter, Jane, married David Crowell Gorham, who bought the Wilcox farm and in after years added many acres to the original lot.

(Both Ephraim Wilcox and son Lumon evidently took their religion seriously, for in the early records of the Congregational Society they stated they could not accept all the points in the Congregational creed. They must have been prevailed upon to change their minds as they were active members of that church the rest of their lives.)

Like other thrifty Yankee farmers the Wilcox's added a blacksmith shop and cider mill to the usual barns.

The original plan of the house was of the small Cape Cod type, with huge chimney in the center, the usual brick oven in the kitchen and fireplaces in the rooms on the first floor.

To make more room the chimney was taken out about 1860, which did away with the interesting brick oven and fireplaces.

The kitchen was panelled with wide boards painted the peculiar red used so much at that period on walls and furniture.

Today it is owned and occupied by Henry and Edwin Gorham. Henry, who has always operated the farm since he was a young man is still going strong at the age of 83, keeping the farm under cultivation. Brother Ed. has been his assistant since his retirement. They have Durham cattle, sheep and horses.





**Gage's Bridge—Oldest Bridge in Windham County**

### *Gage's Bridge*

Gage's covered bridge across the Saxtons River at Gageville, is 106 years old, being the oldest bridge in Windham county. It is the only bridge ever to span the river at this point. About 1890 two big laminated wooden arches were added. It is still in good condition and served the community well at the time of the flood, as much of the traffic was routed over it.

The builder of this bridge was Sanford Granger. He owned and operated a sawmill on the site where Gage's Basket Factory now stands. It was by this name that the bridge was first known. It is probable that the timbers used were from his mill. He was widely known as a bridge builder. He also built the Tucker Toll Bridge in Bellows Falls.

Mr. Granger was the instigator of the bridge, (evidently he had an eye for business). Records show that he and others in that locality, petitioned the county court for a bridge at that point and a road. In consequence a town meeting was held July 18, 1835, "to see if the town will agree to build the road laid out by a committee appointed by the county court on the petition of Sanford Granger and others, the present season". The town voted to instruct the town agent to investigate the matter and report to the selectmen if he found no chance for the town "to get rid of making the road surveyed". Building of the road could not be avoided, the town instructed the selectmen to levy a tax of 10 cents on the grand list. One condition was that Granger would agree to pay \$200 toward the road and build the bridge aside from the abutments, "on the plan of the one which, the said Granger built across Saxtons river at Saxtons River village and of equally good material as the Brookline bridge so called" for \$6 per running foot. From this it appears that the bridge itself cost \$702.

### *Maple Grove Grange No. 156*

Maple Grove Grange, No. 156, seems to owe its existence to George Campbell, who interested J. H. Clark in the movement, and with him secured the interest of a large proportion of the population of Westminster West. According to the statement of one of the charter members, the "Maple Grove" was selected because of the large number of sugar orchards in the locality. At the time of the fiftieth anniversary of its organization, no list of the charter members was found, and it was believed that the only living persons of that original number were Mrs. Anna Clark, Mrs. Martha Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Campbell. The old book has since appeared, and it shows that Charles Campbell was also a charter member, and that although her husband was Secretary on the night of organization, Mrs. Miller did not become a member until the next meeting. Now, ten years later, Charles Campbell is the only living charter member.

The first entry in the Secretary's record is as follows: "West Westminster, Dec. 17, 1874. Maple Grove Grange was organized this evening by Deputy Boyden, consisting of thirty members. The following officers were chosen:

Master	William B. Cutting
Lecturer	Jerome Holden
Assist. Steward	H. G. Harlow
Treas.	H. P. Dinsmore
Gate Keeper	H. P. Ranney
Pomona	Mrs. J. H. Clark
Overseer	D. C. Gorham
Steward	R. H. Braley
Chaplain	O. F. Buxton
Secretary	Reuben Miller
Ceres	Mrs. H. P. Ranney
Flora	Miss E. L. Harlow
Lady assistant Steward	Mrs. H. G. Harlow

Our Worthy Deputy seems to have carried the Parish by storm, as there were thirty-five more applicants than the constitution allows at the organization. Ordered to meet again on the 30th inst. R. Miller, Secretary."

The Charter Members were: Reuben Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Otis Buxton, Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. Ranney, Elijah Goodell, Harlan P. Dinsmore, Mrs. T. W. Stowell, Jerome Holden, Mr. and Mrs. George Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Fred G. Campbell, Charles H. Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hunt Clark, Mr. and



Mrs. Henry G. Harlow, Mr. and Mrs. David Crowell Gorham, Russel Braley, Mr. and Mrs. William B. Cutting, Jason Gorham, Henry B. Harlow, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Winchester, Joseph Powers Chas. F. Moore, E. M. Holden.

It may be noted in passing that Miss E. L. Harlow, who was chosen Flora, soon became Mrs. F. G. Campbell.

At the meeting on December 30 Deputy Boyden of Townsend was again present and assisted in initiating the thirty-five applicants. Mrs. Miller was one of these candidates and she with Mrs. Mary R. Cutting and Walter Holden are all that survive of the first class to be initiated here.

Evidently the Patrons showed in their early meetings the tendency which, even in recent years, a visitor has noted and commented upon; for on February 25, the secretary records that the Worthy Chaplain suggested such a thorough shaking that (unlike oil and water) the members of our order might be found mingling together when seated in the grange.

By-laws were adopted in March, but these and the original charter long ago disappeared, and it was only a few years before the fiftieth anniversary that a new charter was procured and a new set of by-laws adopted. However, the Grange seems to have got along pretty well without either.

For many years the regular meetings were held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month; but in 1907 the Grange voted to change to the first and third Thursdays, which have been the regular meeting days since.

During its first half century, as during the decade that has elapsed since, Maple Grove Grange had its ups and downs. At the end of the first year the secretary reported that one member had been expelled and one had withdrawn. The number of members was 68. A year later, in spite of several withdrawals and several suspensions, there were 78 members in good standing and the average attendance had been 30. The number of members seems never to have been so large again as during 1876. Quite a number of members lived in Saxtons River, there being no grange there till later. Only four years after its organization the Grange found it necessary to consider how to create more interest, since, out of a membership of 68, the average attendance for at least one quarter was only 12. Every member present agreed to try to interest some other member, and for many years the attendance was never so small again. With organization of Saxtons River Grange and the decrease in population of the West Parish, it was inevitable that our membership should decrease.

At one time during the half-century there were only thirty members, but soon there was a large increase. At the end of that period there were 42 members in good standing. Now, at the end of sixty years, there are thirty-one names on the register. We have eleven silver star members.

There have been, including the present incumbent, nineteen different masters, as a general thing each being re-elected for a second year, a few for a third. J. H. Clark served as master at least four different times, two years at each time. But during the last decade A. C. Barnes has beaten the record by holding the office eight successive years. Mrs. Anna Clark was secretary twenty-two years and Fred G. Campbell treasurer nearly or quite as long. Addie Harlow has now been secretary twenty years. Others have held the same chair for comparatively long periods.

It is interesting to note that for the first thirty years the new officers were always installed by a past master, often by Past Master Wm. B. Cutting, with the exception of the year 1901, when they were installed by Deputy Sargeant, while in 1906 and 1907 they were installed by Deputy Albee. Since 1913 until 1930 with very few exceptions by Deputy Stoddard. In 1926 the installation was by the state master, O. L. Martin, in 1931 by State Master Lawrence, and in the past two years by Deputy E. M. Farr.

From time to time members of Maple Grove Grange have contributed work to help the unfortunate brothers, and in several instances money has been taken from the treasury to aid the afflicted. The records show that not many years before the semi-centennial of this Grange the Brothers repaired the village sidewalk while the Sisters prepared dinner in the vestry. In 1927 the walk to the church was graveled, while the sisters again furnished dinner. But the greatest public work done by this Grange as an organization was on May 11, 1876, when the brothers, with the help of a few others who volunteered, set a double line of maple trees from B. A. Walker's to George Campbell's. Unfortunately for the beauty of the road, most of the trees north of the village died, but those on the south are now large trees, making the road a beautiful avenue.

At the second meeting, in December, 1874, an agent was appointed and a committee to confer with the local merchants in regard to the trade of the grange. Evidently the conference did not produce satisfactory results, for during a number of years a grange agent made purchases for patrons amounting to many

hundreds of dollars; and in 1878 the agent was instructed to make arrangements, if possible, for shipping produce directly to market. But that feature has long been given up.

In its early days Maple Grove Grange was the scene of a wedding, when Charles Moore and Laura Fernald were made one by Wm. B. Cutting in his capacity as justice of the peace. If the secretary described the wedding in his records, this historian failed to find it; but one who was there (Mrs. J. H. Clark) says that the bride's father and mother and uncle and aunt, namely Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fernald and Mr. Mrs. Loren Goodell, "stood up" with the happy couple, and that they had a big time, with wedding cake and all the fixings.

In the fall of 1884 Maple Grove Grange held its first fair. Secretary J. H. Clark reports, "The exhibition was pronounced a decided success, many of the articles being really meritorious and worth a place in any state or county fair. There is no question that, if the members will take a little pains, these autumn festivals can be made a prominent feature in our institution and of great profit to the members." Again in 1886 he writes, "The fruit and vegetables were better than at the county fair." But in the next year the season was unfavorable, and the exhibit, though fair, was not so good as usual. There seems not to have been another fair until 1913, and the only record of this is that the Committee reported it a success. For several successive years a fair was held and the same report was given. It used to be said that the only time the West Parish was eaten out was at one of these fairs, when the crowd from out of town was so unexpectedly large that the waiters found pretty poor picking. It is now a good many years since we have held a fair.

Another interesting feature that we have not been able to keep up is the Ladies' Night. The first occasion of this kind seems to have been October 30, 1890, when the ladies filled all the chairs. For a decade or more the last meeting in October was observed in this way, a feast always following the meeting, chicken pie on several occasions. On one of these evenings the secretary writes, "After the literary program, supper was announced and the brothers' faces sparkled like diamonds, for well they knew what to expect, and they did eat and were satisfied. Question, why don't the brothers have a night and give the sisters a treat?" Again she wrote, "after the program, supper was served, which the brothers did justice to, and now the sisters are waiting for the brothers to take their turn at the wheel and give them a good square meal." The sisters had to wait until



1901,, when, on Ladies' Night Bro. McQuaide proposed to have a gentlemen's night and serve supper. He was made chairman for that event. Under date of the very next meeting the secretary for the evening wrote, "The men served supper, which from the testimony of visiting friends and the fair sex of the Grange compared favorably with any entertainment heretofore presented to the Grange." But it is significant that he adds, "The committee having the matter in charge cannot let the opportunity pass without expressing the obligation which they owe the lady members who, on the sly and in open ways, contributed to the success of the meeting.

Of course the lecturers have presented good programs, consisting of readings, recitations, essays, and discussions. The number of original essays in the first quarter-century might well make those of later days envy our forefathers their brains; and everything connected with farming as well as many social and political matters have been discussed in the hall of Maple Grove Grange. In 1882 Sister Mary Goodell (wife of Charles Goodell) read an essay on "What shall we do with our girls?" Of this the secretary said, it "showed that the Lord did well in sending Sister Goodell a good lot of girls to do with." Sister Goodell was the mother of seven girls. At a meeting in 1901 there was recitation by "Little Fred Harlow." From this beginning evolved the brother, who as Worthy Master, welcomed those who were at the celebration of our fiftieth anniversary, and has held some chair ever since.

One feature of program has been "The Maple Leaf", a paper usually, but not always, edited by some of the younger sisters. Miss Mary R. Cutting was formerly often the editor and reader of the paper. It was once a frequent feature, especially on Ladies' Nights and at open meetings; but for a considerable number of years it has made its appearance only in connection with the annual supper. It must not be allowed to die, for it is one of the distinctive features of Maple Grove Grange.

Another distinctive feature is the annual supper. All granges are noted for their "feeds", but in addition to all the other suppers, big and little, Maple Grove Grange has from the very first held a special oyster supper in mid winter. At first it was more likely to be in January, though a good many times on New Years Day; but many years ago the Grange voted that it should be held annually during Christmas week. This supper has always been open to all members of a Patron's family, and usually each Patron has had the privilege of inviting a limited

number of guests, this being determined by vote on each occasion. Once this supper called forth 150 persons, but in these decadent times one third of that number is considered a good attendance. However, as long as Maple Grove Grange exists the Maple Leaf and the annual oyster supper should be retained.

The foregoing is substantially the history read at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Maple Grove Grange. The only changes made are one or two corrections as to fact, and a few additions to make it apply to the past ten years as well as to the preceding fifty. The only notable events of the sixth decade not already mentioned, so far as the compiler sees in the records, are (1) June 16, 1927, a program in honor of Mrs. Anna Clark, the only living charter member that was still a member of the Grange. Mrs. Clark, was seated near her old post at the secretary's table, and she spoke about some of the good times she had had in the Grange. Letters were read from Mr. and Mrs. Fred G. Campbell, who were also charter members, but had withdrawn after moving from town, and Mrs. Martha Miller and Miss Mary Cutting, both of whom were, as previously stated, among the original applicants that had to wait for the next meeting. (2) In 1931 permission was obtained from the selectmen of the town to put a sign on the town hall, marking it as the meeting place of Maple Grove Grange. In a preceding paragraph, if it had not been overlooked mention would have been made of a contribution made from the Grange treasury for flood sufferers in 1927. Since the foundation the grange educational fund this Grange has contributed regularly to it.

The records contain so many things that would be interesting that it has been hard to select, but an attempt has been made to give a general idea of what the grange has meant to its members and the community. Long live Maple Grove Grange, the Maple Leaf, and the annual oyster supper.

The foregoing history was originally written by J. Ora Codding and read at the celebration of the Semi-Centennial anniversary November 25, 1924. It was revised for the Sixtieth Anniversary in 1934.

Today in the year 1941 there are still living two of the first members namely; Miss Mary R. Cutting of Bellows Falls and Walter Holden of Saxtons River. At present there are two other Granges in town; Boyden Grange in Westminster village and Fall Mountain Grange of Bellows Falls which has held its meetings at the North Westminster Community House since its completion.

The ideals and principles of Maple Grove the oldest grange in town are still upheld and carried on by the present generation under the able leadership of Worthy Master Ralph McCoy.



Walter Holden—83 years old



*Windham County's Oldest Brick House*

This house is located in West Parish about two miles south of the village. It is a large two story square structure with an almost flat roof. The architectural designs are typical of that period. Plain and well balanced yet rather intricate in detail. Chimneys were built on both ends of the house with large fireplaces in the rooms.

The original house on this farm was the usual log cabin, which stood in the "mowin" west of the present house. That gave way to a wooden dwelling across the road. In 1810, Elijah Ranney owner of the farm built the present brick house which was enormous in size compared to the other houses in town. When he moved into the new one, he tore down the wooden structure. He lived here until his death on Feb. 26, 1850, at the age of 76.

Deacon Asahel Goodell, who had married Dea. Elijah's daughter, Elizabeth, bought the place from the estate in 1851 and moved there. Thus it became known as the "Goodell Place". The Deacons daughter, Gracia and son Elijah, neither one having married, carried on the farm after their parents death. Dea. Asahel Goodell dying Nov. 21, 1875 at the age of 76, and Mrs. Goodell dying March 17th, 1876, four months later at the age of 79.

Walter Holden, a lad of 16 years went to work on the farm in 1873. He was hired for a period of seven months. At the end of that time they asked him to "stay on". Stay on he did, until 50 years had lapsed. During those years Elijah died, Feb. 2, 1898. He was 70 years old. Gracia lived to be 87, dying May 4, 1913. She was the last member of this branch of the Goodell family. The brother and sister willed the place to Walter Holden, as his pay for staying with them to the end.

On November 28, 1917, he married Miss Ida M. Martin of Londonderry. In 1923 they sold the place to Will Taylor of Newport, Vt. (he being the same person who bought and sold the old Campbell Homestead). They moved to Saxtons River, where they now live. Mr. Holden will be eighty four in December.



Windham County's Oldest Brick House. Built in 1810

In 1932 Mr. Taylor sold the place to F. Sidney Clark of Windsor, Conn. He and his father operate the farm today.

We believe the wall paper on the "parlor", a uniform gilt design on white background, to be the original, put on when the



Fireplace in the "parlor" of the Old Brick House

house was built. It is a very heavy quality of paper. However, we are not sure, but we do know that it was there in 1873, making it 68 years old.

This house has been the scene of much activity. Many stories have been handed down, one in particular.—Back in the 1860's the Ladies Aid Society used to meet in the afternoon, at different homes. This particular afternoon the ladies congregated at the brick house each bringing their thimble and needle to do the neighborhood sewing. The latter part of the afternoon was devoted to preparing a bountiful repast, for in those days the men and rest of the family came to join in the supper hour. After which a social evening ensued as the neighbors "talked things over."





**Doorway showing style of architecture used in 1810. Note the elaborate chair-railing and paneling**

### *The Military Line*

Perhaps it may be of interest to some to recall a little of the history of the town in its former military exploits.

It seems that the town at one time divided itself into two military districts for the annual "June training", so called one in the east part of the town and our own, the western district.

Capt. Ephraim Ranney being the first commander after the organization was started. This line was a rather indefinite one leading along the top of Rocky Hill that natural geographical division for mode of convenience in travel except that first two houses on the other side seemed for some reason to prefer to belong to this side's organization. Mr. Frank Miller when quite a large boy remembers seeing one or two annual parades. Capt. A. P. Ranney being the last one to hold that important office; and seeing in line with others Ex-Captains D. C. Gorham and Russell Ranney along with the soldiers of the Civil War in real military tread A. D. Kerr B. A. Walker and Otis Buxton as well as all of the young men in town perhaps something like 40 or 50 strong ——"a real inspiring sight to a boy's eyes". They had guns of the then regular army pattern, enough to go around but the uniforms except for the officers, now and then disclosed a pair of overalls.

There is no history of any actual service done, although they more or less considered themselves as "minute men", to respond at a moment's notice for a protection of our northern frontier.

It is written that at the time of the Guilford uprising, quitted by Ethan Allen, Capt. Ranney refused to lead his men against new neighbors, but many of the company wished to be in if there was any fight, so a lot of them marched by themselves finally as far as Putney where they met Capt. Allen on his way to Westminster Court House and Jail with captured prisoners.

Although it is perhaps nothing very heroic locally, this town has always done its full share nationally. We have floating in the West Parish village cemetery 36 flags commemorating the deeds of old soldiers; about 14 of these are for Revolutionary men, 2 for the war of 1812, and 20 or more for the Civil War service

NOTE: This information was furnished by Frank Miller.

*Occasion of Triplicate Character*

Anniversaries Observed at House-Warming in Henry K. Willards Home, the Old Bradley Homestead, in Westminster

(Vermont Phoenix, Brattleboro, Nov. 10, 1911)

A spirit of cordial welcome and good will was abundantly manifested in historic Westminster Monday evening, when an observance of a three-fold character took place in the historic old Bradley homestead. The occasion was a double anniversary—the 56th anniversary of the marriage of the late Henry Augustus Willard and the late Sarah Bradley Willard, who died in 1909, within a month of each other, and the 10th anniversary of the marriage of their son, Henry Kellogg Willard, and Helen Parker Willard. It was also a housewarming for the people of Westminster, Henry K. Willard having completed the restoration of the old homestead, which he bought back into the family two years ago. Mr. Willard is a native of Washington and a life-long resident of that city, but it is his purpose to come to Westminster to stay a part of each year in the old house hallowed by sacred memories.

Between 150 and 200 guests assembled in the homestead at about 8 o'clock and from then until 11 o'clock the hospitality for which the old home was noted was renewed, the lives and characteristics of members of this prominent family who were associated with the history of the town were recalled, and two loving cups and a picture were presented to Mr. and Mrs. Willard. Beautiful decorations of chrysanthemums and asparagus vine were conspicuous, some of the flowers being sent by Washington friends.

Although born in Saxtons River Mr. Willard's mother, a daughter of Judge Daniel Kellogg, was brought up in Westminster by Mr. Willard's great-grandfather, Judge William C Bradley, from the age of nine months to 24 years, going as a bride to Washington. Judge Bradley determined that her marriage to Henry A. Willard should be a notable event and about 40 persons responded to the invitation to attend the wedding. Judge Bradley said that "the old hive never would swarm like that again." At the same hour of the day as that when his father and mother were married 56 years earlier Mr. and Mrs. Willard received their guests Monday evening, standing upon the same





**William Czar Bradley Residence**

rug which the elder Mr. and Mrs. Willard stood upon when they were married, in the same room and with the same paper on the walls of the room, now about 111 years old.

About 1250 invitations were issued for this memorial occasion, many going to Washington. The night was stormy, but over 150 guests came, including Congressman Frank Plumley of Northfield, Rev. Samuel R. Maxwell of Greenfield, Mass., ex-Congressman and Mrs. Kittredge Haskins, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke C. Fitts, Miss Mary F. Fitts, Miss Florence Fitts, Miss Mary F. Shakshober and Rev. E. Q. S. Osgood of Brattleboro, Mrs. Arthur Lord of Plymouth, Mass., Benjamin W. Reiss and Mrs. Miranda B. Tulloch of Washington, Miss Helen A. Crain of Springfield, this state, Miss Susanna Willard and Miss Theodora Willard of Cambridge, Mass., Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Tougas and Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Walker of Boston, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Willard of Newburyport, Mass., Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Willard of Worcester Mass., Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Prentice of Milford, Mass., all of whom were Mr. and Mrs. Willard's house guests, and Mrs. Phineas Smith and daughters, Miss Bertha and Miss Daisy Smith, of Roxbury, Mass., intimate friends.

At 8 o'clock the family party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Willard, their two sons, Henry Augustus Willard, 2d, and William Bradley Willard, and their daughter, Sarah Kellogg Willard, came down stairs and entered the north parlor while the bridal march from Lohengrin was played by Leitsinger's orchestra of Brattleboro. The receiving party consisted of George C. Wright of Westminster, who made the introductions, Mr. and Mrs. Willard, Representative Frank Plumley of the second Congressional district, Col. and Mrs. Kittredge Haskins and Mrs. Miranda B. Tulloch.

After the reception the guests assembled in and near the central hallway and speakers were introduced by Mr. Wright, who first presented Attorney Clarke C. Fitts. In hearty and felicitous words Mr. Fitts expressed the gratification of the many Vermont friends of Mr. and Mrs. Willard because of their decision to come here for at least a part of the time. Col. Haskins spoke historically, recalling the lives of Mr. Willard's father, his grandfather, Judge Daniel Kellogg, his great-grandfather, Judge William C. Bradley, and his great-great-grandfather, Gen. Stephen Rowe Bradley. Congressman Plumley expressed his pleasure at being in Westminster for the first time and recalled his pleasant memory of the 87th birthday anniversary luncheon given by Henry Augustus Willard to the Oldest Inhabitants association in Washington May 14, 1909.

The next speaker came as a surprise to Mr. and Mrs. Willard. He was Benjamin W. Reiss, recording secretary of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants, District of Columbia, of which Mr. Willard is a vice president. This is an incorporated organization maintained for sentimental purposes, for promoting a brotherly spirit, observing patriotic anniversaries and the like. In behalf of the association Mr. Reiss presented a beautiful silver loving cup as a token of esteem and regard—to Mrs. Willard as a true wife and a true mother and to Mr. Willard as a good citizen and an honored member and officer of the association. He pinned upon Mr. Willard's coat the badge of the organization. Mr. Willard expressed the gratitude of himself and wife and took occasion to say that the latch-string of hospitality would be out to all the Westminster community and to his other friends at all times and that he wished to re-establish the hospitality that existed in the old house in his grandfather's time. Mr. Willard said he wished to hear from Mr. Wright, and the latter not only responded with happy remarks, expressing the high regard of the community for the Willard family, but also gave Mr. and

Mrs. Willard another surprise by presenting a handsome silver loving cup and a handsome picture by Nutting in behalf of the Westminster people.

The cup from Washington, enclosed in an enameled tin box, bore the following inscription: "1901-1911, A token of esteem to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kellogg Willard, from the Association of Oldest Inhabitants, District of Columbia, upon the tenth anniversary of their marriage, Nov. 6, 1911." On the cup presented by the Westminster people is inscribed: "Presented to Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Willard by citizens of Westminster, Vt., Nov. 6, 1911."

Other speakers were Edgar Lincoln Willard of Newburyport, president, and C. W. Walker of Boston, historian, of the Association of Descendants of Maj. Simon Willard, a Kentish soldier in the time of King Philip's war and, a progenitor of the Willard family who came from England about 1634, Rev. S. R. Maxwell of Greenfield, formerly of Walpole, N. H. who designed a beautiful tablet which Henry K. Willard presented to the Unitarian church of Walpole in memory of his father and mother about two years ago, Rev. E. Q. S. Osgood of Brattleboro, pastor of the Unitarian church to which Mr. Willard recently presented a replica of Larkin Mead's "Recording Angel," in memory of his parents, Rev. C. E. Aimar, the present Unitarian pastor in Walpole, and Miss Susanna Willard of Cambridge, a member of the executive committee of the Association of Descendants of Major Simon Willard.

After the speaking delightful refreshments were served by Mrs. Willard assisted by several of her women guests. T. D. Cook & Co. of Boston were the caterers. During the evening Leitsinger's orchestra rendered a program which was particularly pleasing. Mr. and Mrs. Willard received several gifts besides those presented in a public way.

As previously stated, Henry K. Willard has been a life-long resident of Washington. He was born in the old Willard's Hotel Oct. 20, 1856, and he is known throughout the city as a successful dealer in real estate. His father was eminently successful in the hotel business and was one of the most prominent business men in Washington. Mrs. Henry K. Willard was Miss Helen Wilson Parker of Miffln, Pa., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Parker, now of Washington. Mr. Parker is a prominent banker in the national capital.

For the past four summers Mr. and Mrs. Willard have rented a house in Walpole which they have occupied as a sum-



mer home, but they expect to give it up soon and they will spend the coming winter in California. The house was built early in the 19th century by Gen. Stephen Rowe Bradley. The latter's son, Judge William C. Bradley, owned the Westminster house, where he died March 3, 1867. After his death Mrs. Henry Augustus Willard owned it for a time, but later it passed out of the family. Two years ago Henry K. Willard bought it back and since has been putting it in first class condition, adding four bathrooms, fitting it with electric lights and making other improvements. It was built about the year 1800 and in two of the rooms the original paper has not been removed or covered. It is a spacious old house, an ideal place in which to live. On the north parlor the paper represents Egyptian scenes and in an upstairs bedroom Olympic games are depicted on the paper. Mr. Willard has had the walls of the south parlor handpainted to represent water scenery. On the premises stands Judge Bradley's law office, a small one-story structure, with many of the old law books, book shelves, legal papers, drawer cabinets, etc., just as he left them.



William C. Bradley Law Office



**The Recording Angel**

### *The Recording Angel*

This beautiful memorial to the memory of Henry Augustus and Sarah Bradley Willard stands facing their final resting place in the Old Village Cemetery of their native Westminster.

The RECORDING ANGEL is a marble replica of the colossal statue modelled of snow on the last night of the year 1856 on a street corner in Brattleboro by Larkin Goldsmith Mead, a young man of 21 years. The next morning it was discovered and attracted much attention in the papers throughout the country. He developed his love for art and sculptoring and as a result attained great fame.

Some of his best known works include the statue of "Ceres", surmounting the dome of the Vermont State Capitol, also marble statues of Ethan Allen on the portico of our state capitol and in Statuary Hall in Washington, D. C. The one at the Vermont Capital, while being moved for repair work in June 1941, was smashed. However, a replica of the famous work is now in process.

Henry K. Willard, while abroad with his family, visited the studio of Larkin G. Mead in Florence Italy, May 1910. He then made arrangements for the statue of the "Recording Angel" to be placed in a Memorial Monument designed by Mr. Mead.

Larkin Mead died October 15, 1910, in Florence, Italy.



Flashlight picture of group at Walker's Store—Westminster, Dick Wright, Walter Johnson, Rob Miller, Wallace Metcalf, Fred Metcalf, Jerome Collins





World War I Memories

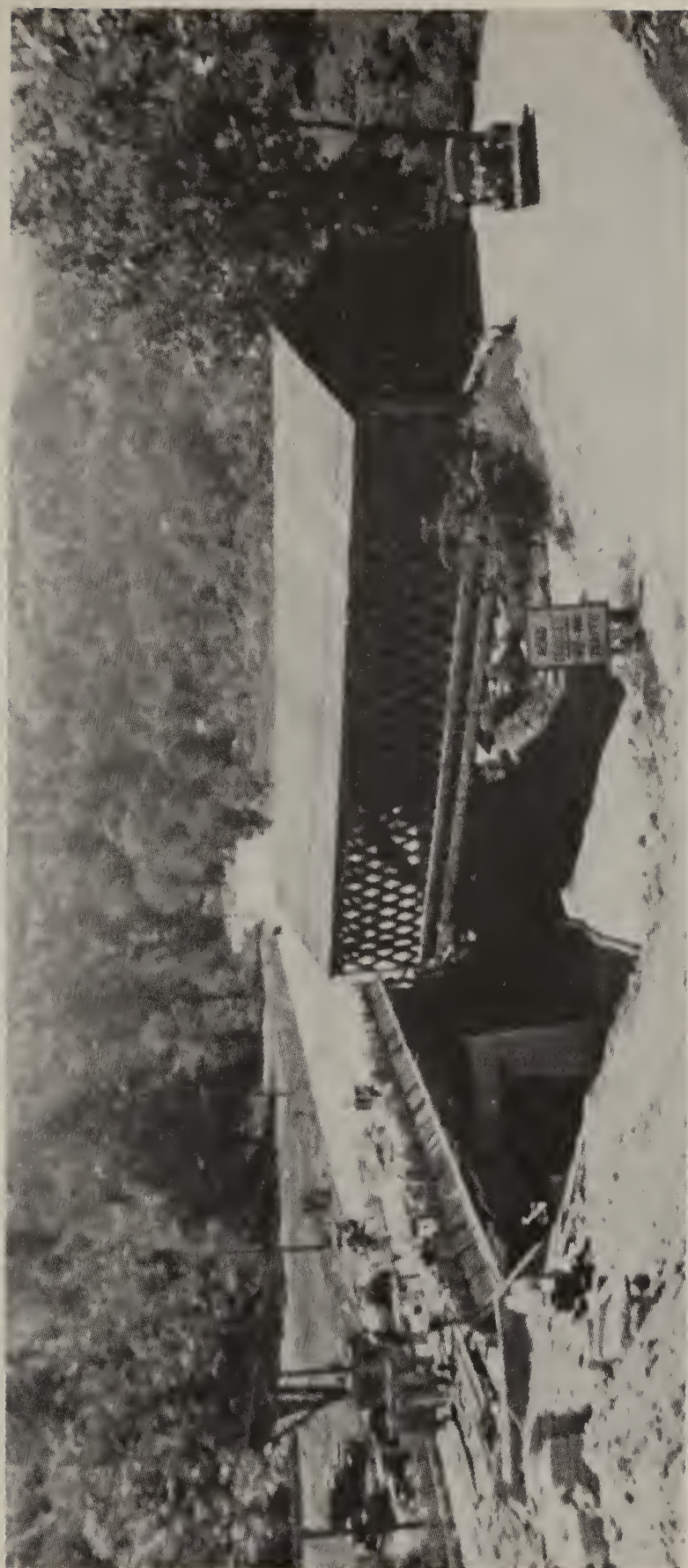


### *Sabin's Bridge*

Sabin's bridge was formerly called "Woolley bridge". It was 117 feet long and of lattice construction and had been reinforced with laminated wooden arches. The first bridge was built in 1802 at the time a road along Saxtons River was laid. In 1819 a freshet carried it away and two years later another was built at a cost of \$245. In 1828 high water destroyed this, and another was immediately constructed. Town records contain no contract for this bridge but there are four receipted bills from John Farnsworth totaling \$645. This bridge served travelers until 1840 when Westminster, which had built Gage's bridge a short way down the river and opened a new road along the south bank, was successful in a petition to the county court to have the Woolley bridge discontinued.

In 1848, it was ordered reopened by Windham county court and that Westminster should build a new bridge and approaches. Westminster petitioned the court to have part of the cost charged to Rockingham, Grafton and Athens on the grounds that the inhabitants of these towns were benefited rather than Westminster. The result being that the bridge was built by John Minard and Ransome Farnsworth, at a cost of \$1,788.05 and with the approaches the total was slightly more than \$2,000, of which Rockingham was ordered to pay \$674.74 and Grafton \$162.85 in addition of the courts costs. The court ruled that Athens would derive no appreciative benefit and the petition against that town was dismissed.

In past years the bridge had become unsafe for heavy loads, also the curved approaches were built for the horse and buggy days. In 1940 the town voted to instruct the selectmen, to have built, a new cement bridge which has been done, and was opened for traffic in June, 1941. This is about 25 feet from the old site in order to remove the curves on the approaches from the highway. The old bridge was quickly taken down with mechanized machinery. The salvaged timbers will be used in repairing other covered bridges in town. The remaining parts were burned on the bank of the river, thus completing the story of another landmark.



Sabin's Bridge—the old and the new—Gageville





Westminster Athletic Club, Basketball Team, 1907. Seated, left to right; Geo. Wright, Ray Metcalf, Charlie Hitchcock; standing, Lynn Fullam, Ira Hitchcock, Lynn Lawrence

*Rural Free Delivery*

The Rural Free Delivery of mail began in Westminster July 1, 1903, under George Walker as Postmaster with Roland R. Barber as carrier and Lillian M. Barber as substitute. The whole number of pieces handled the first month was 1,771 and at the last full month of counting, May 1925, there were 1,789 letters carried out on the route which were 18 more letters than the total number of pieces brought in and carried out in the very first month of its history. The business having increased rapidly during those last eight years.

Soon after the route began the Parcel Post section started. At Christmas time, especially, the mails would be extremely heavy.

Horses were used entirely until 1922. After that a car was used, until the latter of January, when the mud became so deep on the back roads, that horses were again resorted to during "mud season". The entire route was 21.5 miles serving about 100 families in nearly 80 boxes. There was only one day in its history that the mail did not leave the office, which was the day of the Blizzard in March, 1919. On another occasion it took from 10 a m to 6:45 p. m. to complete the trip.

The route from Westminster post office was discontinued July first, 1933 after 30 years of service.

It was divided and given to two Putney mail carriers, David Hannum and Henry Gould. At this time, there were only two of the original families living on the route, that were there when it was started in 1903, namely, Wallace and Laura Ranney, and Fred and Mertie Lewis.

About 1900 the West Parish R. F. D. began, mail being received from the Putney post-office. The first carrier was Charles Farrington of Putney. He came up as far as Fred Campbell's and then went back via the "Brook Road" to East Putney. Later it was extended as far as the village and up the West Road by Seymour Minard's back to Putney then onto west hill as far as Calvin Reeds, serving the Westminster West families in that corner of the town. The next mail carrier was Patrick O'Connor familiarly, known on the route as "Pat". He continued for 22 years, retiring in 1930. He was followed by David Hannum, who is the present carrier.



1915 Chapman's Store, W.W.: Town Road Roller packs the snow for winter driving, Ernest Gleason (driver), with John Ormsby rider.



Burt Simonds' four horse team starts for Spofford Lake for an all day picnic in 1908. Taken in front of Chapman's Store





Other views of the Forest  
showing old dam, penstock  
and power house.

### *North Westminster Community House*

North Westminster served its first Town Meeting Dinner in the School House, March 11, 1920. Mr. John A. Bush was treasurer of money made that day.

The community wondered what to do with the money and Mr. Bush suggested that they form a society to be called the North Westminster Improvement Society, and have suppers and entertainments to add to this fund.

The School House Hall was the only available place to hold entertainments, etc., and as the Hall was small, it was hard to do things of that kind. November 10, 1924 the community had a meeting to see if they could not have a hall of their own. A committee was appointed to look over the Dance Pavilion at Barber Park (which was for sale at that time) to see if it could be used for a community house. A report of the committee showed that the moving and making over for the price asked would not be practical. Another committee was appointed to see Mr. Will Church about buying a building lot from him on Church Avenue. As the Church Estate was not settled, a clear title of the land could not be given.

Finally, the Leland lot where the Community House now stands, was purchased November 9, 1925.

The community still held socials, entertainments and suppers to add to the building fund and on April 10, 1930, the Community House was started being built. The building was dedicated July 31, 1930, since which time it has been used for Town Meeting, suppers, entertainments, dances and basketball games.



The C. C. C. Boys helped paint the North Westminster Community House in 1933





**North Westminster Community House, 1941**



**C. C. C. Camp located on Gulf road overlooking Gageville**





**Stanley and Lynn Fullam each get one. In the days when shooting  
a doe was legal, 1909**



1933—Charlie Hitchcock and Clarence Reed outstanding coon hunters of Westminster West, line them up. With the aid of faithful "Dixie", they caught 33 that season. Every fall when the season opens Dixie still leads on the trails.



**Town Hall—East Parish. Built in 1889**



**Goodhue Tavern—was located just south of Parker's pond near cement bridge. Taken from a sketch by Ed Gorham, West Parish**



*Vermont's Sesquicentennial*  
*In Westminster*

*Vermont's Sesquicentennial*

in Westminster

The Westminster Committee for Vermont's Sesquicentennial met for the first time Feb. 1, 1941. This was a general get together for ideas that might be carried out during the year.

The second meeting held Feb. 8, definitely outlined the observance to be held on Town Meeting, March 4th as follows; Patriotic music by members of the Kurn Hattin Band, Prayer, Deacon Rollin H. Ranney and the "Old Westminster Album". Suggestions were in order for characters to be portrayed.

A sub-committee was chosen to take charge; Charles Minard, Ed Gorham, Lynn Fullam and Rollo Metcalf with the General chairman. Mrs. Lynn Fullam, Mrs. Charles Minard, Mrs. Rollo Metcalf and Mrs. Emil Mattson in charge of costuming the characters. Mr. Emil Mattson in charge of the stage.

The Characters chosen and by whom the parts were taken are as follows: Capt. Azariah Wright—Fay Wright, a direct descendant

Ethan Allen—Kenneth Fullam  
 William French—George Ranney  
 William Czar Bradley—Charles E. Minard  
 Rhoda Harlow Ranney—Mrs. Arlene Goodrich  
 Mrs. Fanny Buchanan—Mrs. Emil Mattson  
 Dr. Alfred Stevens—Rollo Metcalf  
 Hollis Harlow—taken by himself

## WESTMINSTER ALBUM

**Capt. Azariah Wright:**—"Bear Facts".

**William French:**—The first blood of the American Revolution, in the State of Vermont was shed on that eventful night of March 13, 1775, known as the "Westminster Massacre", when William French was killed. He was a young man of patriotic spirit and ardent sympathiser with liberty party.

**Ethan Allen:**—Ethan Allen left no stone unturned in his efforts to have Vermont admitted in the Union. Although he was at times extremely crude and forceful, he always gained his point.



**Mrs. Arlene Goodrich depicts Mrs. Rhoda Harlow Ranney considered  
the strongest woman in town.**



The Yorkers (Tories) of Westminster and surrounding towns organizing for the "purpose of opposing the pretended state Vermont", brought Ethan Allen flying to the scene of action with over a hundred men. The old Court House seemed to be a hot bed of these Tory vermin.

"Death-and-Terrors" Allen as he was called by the Yorkers who feared him more than Death with all its Terrors, seized a large stock of gun powder sent to the Tories by the State of New York. Strong guards were placed around the Court House.

Thus the trials of the opposers began. States Attorney Noah Smith told the court right off he was unable to sustain charges against three of the prisoners. Next Attorney Stephen Bradley, for the accused asked for charges on three more to be dropped.

Suddenly there was a commotion, Colonel Allen appeared attired in his well worn regimentals, waving his cocked hat, and with his sword clanking at every step, the tall Green Mountain Boy strode down the aisle. "What goes here?", he shouted.

The startled court and spectators saw that the Colonel was breathless. He had not been in the room when the trials began, but word was brought to him,—likely in Landlord Norton's place—That prisoners were being discharged without trial. Now he came to teach the Court its duty toward all Yorkers, and Tories.

"I would have the young gentleman know," he said in his best sonorous tone, that with my logic and reasoning from the eternal fitness of things, I can upset his Blackstones, his white-stones, his gravestones and his brimstones."

"Fifty miles I have come through the woods with my brave men", to support the civil with the military arm; to quell any disturbances, should they arise; and to aid the sheriff and the court in prosecuting these Yorkers,—the enemies of our noble state. I see, however, that some of them by the quirks of this artful lawyer, Bradley, are escaping the punishment they so richly deserve, and I find also that this little Noah Smith is far from understanding his business, since he at one time moved for prosecution and in the next wishes to withdraw it. Let me warn your Honor to be on your guard lest these delinquents should slip through your fingers, and thus escape, the rewards so justly due their crimes".

He strode out of the court without another word. The next 30 defendants were tried and found guilty, one after another

and fined a total of 1477 pounds and 18 shillings, including costs of court.

Colonel Allen did not return to the trials, but started for Windsor where the Vermont assembly was about to sit, to see if his services were required there.

**Mrs. Frances Buchanan:**—Mrs. Frances Buchanan, widow of Capt. Buchanan and step-daughter of Crean Brush, is said to have been a fascinating woman, endowed with an ease of manner which she had acquired from mingling with polite society, and possessed of a refined taste and many accomplishments.

During one of his frequent visits to Westminster, Gen. Ethan Allen formed an acquaintance with Mrs. Buchanan, which afterwards "ripened into a warm friendship".

John Norton, keeper of the Tavern playfully remarked to her one day, with reference to Ethan Allen, "Fanny, if you marry Gen. Allen, you will be queen of the new State." "Yes", she replied, "if I should marry the devil, I should be the queen of hell".

However with all his faults, she consented to become his wife. The wedding taking place at the residence of Gen. Stephen R. Bradley. Thus did the step-daughter of Crean Brush become the wife of the man for whose apprehension, Gov. Tryon, at the instigation of Brush, had on the 9th day of March, 1774, offered a reward of 100 pounds.

**William C. Bradley:**—William C. Bradley was born at Westminster March 23rd, 1782. He was a precocious child. He began to write poetry at six years of age, published his first prose work at 12. At nine he had read the bible through seven times; was fitted for college at eleven and entered Yale at thirteen.

He was admitted to the bar at the age of 20, and was appointed by the Legislature, attorney for Windham county.

At 24, he represented Westminster in the State Legislature. At 30, was a member of the Council, and at 32 was a representative to Congress.

**Rhoda Harlow Ranney:**—Mrs. Rhoda Harlow Ranney was probably the strongest woman the town of Westminster ever knew. When the bridge between Westminster and Walpole was being built, she ran across the stringers before the planks were laid. In later life, could lift a barrel of cider by the chimes and drink from the bung hole. She was the wife of Ephraim Ranney and is buried in the cemetery at the West Parish.

**Rev. Alfred Stevens:**—Rev. Alfred Stevens, was pastor of the West Parish church for over 50 years. He was always deeply interested in questions of education and all public affairs. Was Superintendant of schools for years. Also represented the Town in the Legislature at Montpelier. He was a man of fine scholarly mind and keen wit. In his later years his parishioners spoke affectionately of him as Father Stevens.

**Hollis Wright Harlow:**—Hollis Wright Harlow is a direct descendant of Hollis Wright, born January 22nd, 1780. He was a nephew of Capt. Azariah Wright. Hollis Wright Harlow has had the honor of being appointed by the Sargeant of Arms as one of the two Pages in the Senate of this years session of Legislature.

### *Bear Facts*

In the History of Westminster, Vermont

(A Ballad)

Way back in seventeen-seventy-four  
In history, we're told  
There lived one Azariah Wright  
Who was both brave and bold.

A captain he, severe and strict,  
Eccentric to the core;  
And when he spoke, his voice pealed forth  
Quite like a lion's roar.

The records show he beat his wife——  
Waved weapons o'er her head;  
And once the Reverend Bullen's nose  
He tweaked, the pages read.

In spite of all his recklessness,  
A pious man was he  
Each Sunday found him in his pew  
Where good folk ought to be.



Now "Uncle 'Riah", as sometimes called,  
Was bothered by a bear  
That trod his cornfields, spoiled the crops  
He'd raised with utmost care.

That cunning but ferocious beast  
Would wait for Sunday morn  
And while the Captain was at church,  
Would raid his fields of corn.

These oft' repeated trespasses  
Aroused the Captain's ire;  
To have a bear elude him thus,  
He soon began to tire.

One Sunday morn, with loaded gun,  
Behind some bush concealed  
He waited for that old he-bear  
To come into his field.

At last from out the thicket,  
He spied old Bruin's head,  
He aimed his gun—the trigger pulled——  
Shot that offender dead.

The loud report was heard in church  
In session close at hand;  
Such daring, bold impiety  
Was hard to understand.

Acquainted with the cause at last,  
The Parson, Deacons too,  
With all the Elders set to work  
To see what they could do.

They called a meeting of the church;  
The offending Brother stood,  
And from the scriptures tried to show  
'Twas lawful to do good.

But all in vain—the Judges gave  
No signs of approbation;  
And Azariah was condemned  
To Excommunication.

Accordingly he was enjoined  
To go on Sunday next,  
And hear the Parson seal his doom  
At close of the morning text.

He did attend—with loaded gun;  
Nor did he try to hide  
His cartridgebox and trusty sword  
Close hanging by his side.

The benediction was pronounced,  
And then the Parson read,  
“Offending Brother”—that was all——  
“Proceed and you are dead”!

These words rang out with mighty force  
As Azariah stood  
And aimed his gun; the parson knew  
That aim was all too good.

So down behind his desk he shrunk;  
Some moments passed, ere he  
Quite dared to take a tiny peek  
At his bold enemy.

He found the hero at a rest,  
And reached with trembling hand  
To the Elder Deacon the order gave——  
“Read it,” was his command.

With staring eyes and accents strained,  
The Deacon in wild affright  
Began to read—but a levelled gun  
Greeted his dimming sight.

“Desist and march!” the victim roared,  
“I will not live in shame!  
Desist and march, I say, or you  
Are all dead men!” he flamed.

No need had he to repeat his threat;  
Confusion great prevailed:  
The man of God leaped from his desk,  
The women and children wailed.

In equal trepidation  
The Deacons, Elders too,  
And congregation all escaped  
The best way that they knew.

At last, sole master of the field  
And of the church as well,  
The victor calmly locked the door.  
The records go on to tell.

He sent the keys with his respects  
To the Pastor——then marched home  
With all the honors of a war  
To be compared to none.

It was nineteen years ere he and the bear  
Could by chance have a reunion——  
Azariah died, as die he would,  
A Brother, in full communion.

——MARGARET WRIGHT BENT



### *Old Fashioned Home Day*

It was decided to have an "Old Fashioned Home Day" on July 26th. The following committees were chosen; Parade and Band Concert; Claude Bensenhaver, Stanley Fullam, W. I. Mayo, Patrick Harty, Clarence Reed, Winthrop Bent, Albert Hindes.

Sale of Food; Mrs. Nan Wood, Chairman.

Literary program; Elizabeth Minard the general chairman, and Paul G. Harlow.

Sports; Charles Holton, Paul Metcalf, Bob Rice, Sydney Clark, Lynn Fullam, Jr., Joe Harty, Jeff Rousseau, Lewis Clark.

Publicity; Laura Fenn, Ralph Bresland, Mrs. Rollin H. Ranney, Mrs. Gerry Walker, Clarence Torrey.

Picture and Antique Display; Emil Mattson, Ed Gorham, Herbert Rhoades, Charles Hitchcock, George Richmond, John Richmond, Oella Minard.

Evening Entertainment; Mrs. Kenneth Fullam, Mrs. Carroll Williams, Mrs. Margaret Wright Bent, Mrs. W. I. Mayo, Miss Sarah Davenport, Mrs. Patrick Harty, Mrs. Arlene Goodrich.

Dance; Arthur Bemis, Ralph McCoy, Ray Metcalf, Doug Newton.

Decorations; Rev. Sydney Byrne, Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick Leonard, Mrs. Charles Langmuir, Mrs. Joseph Barnes, Annahmira Burton, Janice Fullam, Richard Goodrich.

Grounds Committee; Lynn Fullam, George Wood, Rollo Metcalf, Charles Minard, Clarence Torrey.

Police Duty; Westminster Police Dept., Boy Scouts.

These committees have had their meetings and once a month the chairmen would meet with the General Chairman and give reports of their progress. The result of which is the following program for the Old Fashioned Home Day.

*Program*

## A. M.

- 9:00 Sports for the very young.  
10:00 Parade.  
11:00 Sports and Races for young and old.  
Noon Basket Lunch. Food on sale by North Westminster Community.

## P. M.

- 1:00 Band Concert—Brattleboro Military Band.  
2:15 Address by Dr. Seth F. Arnold of Boston, Mass.  
Carlos Garrett of Bellows Falls.  
4:00 Old Fashioned Ball Game.  
6:00  
to Supper Westminster Women's Association.  
7:00  
7:30 Historical Play written by Bertha Miller Collins and  
directed by Mrs. Carroll Williams.  
9:00 Square and round dancing until 12 o'clock.  
Old Pictures and antiques on display all day and evening.

SHOOTING A BEAR IN '74 is the title of the Bertha Miller Collins drama, written especially for this occasion. It revolves around the story of Uncle 'Riah and the bear.

*Vermont*

Synopsis of Address delivered by Dr. Seth F. Arnold,  
Old Fashioned Home Day, July 26, 1941

This day it is presumed was intended to have a double significance marking the Sesquicentennial of the admission of Vermont into the constellation of states and the perhaps stronger inclination to celebrate a general old-fashioned home day.

All natives of Westminster and those of long residence here appreciate such a spirit. We who have been away for a time have had to be content to bask in the reflected glory of the historical significance of our home town. Life can be smaller and narrower in a great city than anywhere else in the world. Such centers of population must be fed by the stronger men and women who have been continually going forth from Vermont; who have become prominent and influential in their adopted homes. This was conspicuously illustrated on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the Vermont Association of Boston. As a part of that program and celebration, a list was presented of those former Vermonters who had become leaders in the civil and political life of Massachusetts. The list was long and formidable, including governors, Senators, leaders of the public service group, leaders of industry, leaders in professional and business life. One was strongly tempted to observe that there was really a reason why the states had seemingly organized against the home state of Vermont in the 1936 presidential election!

When one makes a serious attempt to become familiar with the history of Vermont he is at once impressed with the romance, the struggles, the intrigues and the conquests which are interwoven with the creation of not only a personal independence, but a territorial independence.

From the first glimpse of the region now known as Vermont by Samuel Champlain on July 4, 1609, to the final accomplishment of admission to the Union on March 4, 1791, we see a period replete with struggles and excitement. The first permanent English settlers who ventured into this part of Vermont came from Massachusetts and Connecticut to the town of what is now Brattleboro. And at about the same time a group of Dutch squatters settled in the town of Pownal in the southwestern corner of Vermont. It was not, however, until the British captured Canada in 1760 that there was a real tide of emigration. This attracted the attention of the Royal Governor of New



Hampshire, Bennie Wentworth, who assumed, together with Connecticut and Massachusetts, that the limits of his domain extended to a line twenty miles east of the Hudson River, and in consequence proceeded to make grants of land between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain. This amounted to 131 townships of which Westminster was township number 1 and was known as the New Hampshire Grants. The Governor of New York, on the other hand, challenged the right of New Hampshire to grant these lands and for fourteen years the ownership of the disputed region was debated and on July 20, 1764, an order of King George II and council gave a Decision in favor of New York. Consequently, New York proceeded to grant lands of what is now the state of Vermont. This controversy brought into prominence Ethan Allen as Commander of The Green Mountain Boys. The name of Ethan Allen electrifies the imagination of everyone at all familiar with the early history of this nation. His capture of Fort Ticonderoga in the name of "the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress" while it may not have been the shot heard around the world it was to constitute the suggestion that independence could be and would be obtained.

It was not enough that those rugged pioneers had to struggle with nature, with the Indian tribes, the contentions of Massachusetts and Connecticut—these, however, being mild as compared with those of New York and New Hampshire—but they also had to fight a foe from Canada. The contention between New York and New Hampshire was what brought about the Westminster Massacre with which all of us are fairly familiar, and undoubtedly had much to do with the subsequent declaration of independence when in this same town New Connecticut came into being. However, in Windsor, months later, a State Constitution was drafted and the name Vermont was substituted for new Connecticut.

The new state government was set up in March of 1778, with Thomas Crittenden as Governor, a man of unexcelled courage and versatility. The British, under General Burgoyne, captured Fort Champlain in July of 1777 and the rear guard of the American army retreating from Ticonderoga was defeated at Hubbardton, Vermont, on July 7, 1777. In an attempt to capture American stores in Bennington, the British detachments were defeated by American forces consisting of Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts troops commanded by General John Stark on August 16, 1777. You all recall the battle cry of John Stark: "There are the Red-Coats; they are ours or this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow". This date meant the turning

point of the Colonies' struggle for independence. From that time forward the British forces were so divided that a successful and cooperative campaign was impossible. The new state of Vermont, however, notwithstanding its contribution to the cause of the Revolution was still harassed at home and abroad. The story of Ira Allen is a most unusual one. One's imagination is stimulated when he contemplates the picture and the play which was made between Great Britain on the one hand and the Continental Congress on the other, with no definite pledge being made to either, yet carrying on until success was accomplished and the fourteenth star added to the flag of the United States of America.

An apt quotation from a speech by Congressman Plumley in the National House of Representatives on March 4, 1941—

"The old thirteen United  
Fought the Revolution through  
But single-handed old Vermont  
Fought them and England too."

"A Sonnet: Order is strong  
Strong laws the stars command  
But birds rise by wings  
And thought by freedom lives!  
Much have you done, Lords of exact Berlin  
But one thing fails  
The soul of the machine!

John Stuart Blackie, about 1850.

The best evidence of the soul of the machine is the tremendous increase in population during the decades just previous to 1790 when a group of a few settlements became the vital force of upward of 80,000 souls. It is obvious that these green hills and fertile valleys would have been peopled and tilled by men essentially of the same fibre if Ethan Allen had not succeeded in his audacious attempt on Ticonderoga; if Stark had not won the brilliant victory at Bennington; if MacDonald had not been successful in naval battle off Cumberland Head.

Notwithstanding every attempt in those early days to isolate Vermont it still maintained its independence and will always remain unique in the fact that for fourteen years an independent republic prevailed; was prosperous and well administered. Individualism and thrift are not lost arts to the Vermonter; the Vermonter believes and always has believed in supporting the government rather than having the government support him. He is the salt of human society; a mutually progressive conservative who holds the world to its steady course and prevents a too dangerous swing of the pendulum.

He is the symbol and example of the rugged individualism which is too often sneered at today. The Vermonter still adheres to the old-fashioned virtues of independence; hard work, thrift, keeping promises and staying out of debt. At no time in all history has he accepted the theory that the country and his friends owe him a living, and he has never hesitated to dig for that living. We have but to think of the life and philosophy of Calvin Coolidge to be proud of the contribution to government and life in general that was made by him. A quotation from a message in 1918 is just as applicable at the present moment as at that time: "The nation with the greatest moral power will win. Of that are born Armies and Navies and the resolution to endure; have faith in the moral power of America. It gave independence under Washington and freedom under Lincoln. Here, right never lost, here, wrong never won. However powerful the forces of evil may appear, somewhere there are more powerful forces of righteousness. Courage and confidence are our heritage. Justice is our might. The outcome is in your hand, my fellow American; if you deserve to win, the nation cannot lose".

Locally, we have many shrines to which we may look for inspiration and with which we should keep faith. Not only that monument erected in 1902 at the site of the old Court House and that shaft which marks the spot where lie the remains of William French, but every part of the original township \$1 should remind us of Vermont's Declaration of Independence—

"Westminster Court House, January 15, 1777.

This Convention, whose members are duly chosen by the free voice of their constituents in the several towns, on the New Hampshire grants, in meeting assembled, in our own names, and in behalf of our constituents, do hereby proclaim and publicly declare, that the District of Territory comprehending and usually known by the name and description of the New Hampshire Grants, of right ought to be and is hereby declared forever hereafter to be considered as a free and independent jurisdiction or state." (Extract from Vermont's Declaration of Independence).

May this Declaration here made still remind us that the things we prize most highly—liberty, equality, the right to happiness and security in our homes and persons, are not a heritage to be taken as a matter of course. These things are not a constitutional right; they are ours just so long as we prove ourselves deserving. They are ours not to squander and dissipate, but ours to maintain and hold in trust for generations of Americans yet unborn.

Just so long as we keep this in mind we are keeping faith with the best traditions of Westminster.



## RENEWAL

We paused  
In returning over mountain heights  
To look again

The air was cool and fresh  
And clouds rode bouyantly  
Across the sky

Our souls spread upward  
And shed their load  
Of earth's contamination

A wondrous panorama!  
And nature met the challenge  
As God intended

The spirit renewed,  
We drove on into valleys,  
To meet the night

BERTHA MILLER COLLINS



Westminster Bridge at mouth of Saxtons River

## AMERICA, GOD'S COUNTRY

## Song

## 1.

America, God's country,  
The cherished land we love.  
America, watched over  
By Him, who reigns above.  
May Liberty and Justice  
From shore to shore abound,  
America, God's country,  
Where love and peace are found.

## 2.

America, God's country,  
We love thy hallowed soil  
Where men of worth, the lowly  
May live by honest toil  
May Unity and Freedom  
From pole to pole hold sway  
America God's country,  
We'll honor thee for aye.

## Refrain

May our Flag ever wave o'er America,  
With her emblems of red white and blue.  
To awake in the heart of each country man,  
A pledge to loyal service, anew  
America, thy beauty  
Encompasses us 'round;  
America, God's country,  
Where peace and love are found.

—Words and music by Margaret Wright Bent.



*History of Westminster*



*Later Days to 1981*

*Introduction (Later Days)*

Today's events become tomorrow's history and is so recorded.

When the first edition of the History of Westminster was published in 1941, the purpose was to write and compile the happenings of the first 150 years. It was the first official history of the town since 1867, when the clergy (Fairbanks & Stevens) of the two Congregational Churches, wrote and compiled a summary of his respective Parish and its first settlers. The paper covered edition was printed and distributed by the town, to the head of each family only, free of charge, in the West and East Parishes. Inheriting the copy owned by my Grandfather, Henry O. Minard, provided an out of print rare historical reference for quoted sections in the 1941 history.

Entitled a "Vermont Sesquicentennial Souvenir, 1791-1941", the one thousand printed copies of the History of Westminster have been sold and is now out of print. Found in State Historical Libraries throughout the nation, as well as public and private collections it is used as a reference book for researchers.

Now, forty years later, it seems appropriate to print a second edition. In the second edition, consideration is given to the growth of Westminster since 1941. Reflections into the past influence the planning for the future of a town. Geographical location, geology, industry, business, educational facilities, structural designs in buildings and preservation are important factors. Space does not permit every aspect of the community life to be covered. Therefore, emphasis placed on a few of the accomplishments to help provide further insight into the rich historical happenings and general concerns of its residents in recording Westminster's history, is the goal for this second part of the 1981 edition.

M. ELIZABETH MINARD SIMONDS

*ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

Westminster has been most fortunate in having the services of Mary Fullam and Betty Holton, in the capacity of Town Clerks for a period of over forty years. Betty first served as assistant to Mary. Upon Mary's retirement, Betty was elected to take her place. The Town records have been kept in a concise and orderly manner, making it a pleasure to research the files for historical facts and locating the data needed from 1941-1981 for this part of the second edition of the Town History. I am grateful to both Mary and Betty for their many years of support and inspiration in local historical research. Thanks to Howard Rice, for his summary of the history of the Westminster Volunteer Fire Department since its inception. Photography credits to Virginia Clark, Jill Noss and to all who have contributed photographs, interesting historical facts and information important to the preservation of local history. To each and everyone, your cooperation has been greatly appreciated.

Elizabeth M. Simonds

*Reflections*

Soon after the first edition of this book was printed this country found itself confronted with World War II following the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

Both men and women responded to the Call of the Nation. Military uniforms became a familiar sight as Westminster's citizens volunteered for enlistment in the various branches of the Armed Services. Others joined the ranks when draft numbers were called. By 1943, those of military draft age still remaining at home, were working on farms or in the machine shops in nearby Springfield, Brattleboro and Keene, N.H. Teachers and Clergy were usually in the exempt classification for active service and made contributions by serving in the activities of the war on the "home front". Gas, fuel oil and many food commodities were rationed. Everyone was buying government War Bonds. Persons working in industry and machine shops, in particular, signed up for a certain amount to be deducted each week from their pay check towards the purchase of the different Series of War Bonds being issued. The interest to accumulate and be added on the maturity date of the Bond.

The American Red Cross sponsored First Aid Courses in preparation for any emergency that might arise. The majority of the young doctors and nurses had joined the military ranks to care for the sick and wounded in both the European and Pacific Theaters of War. It was a serious time in the history of our State and Nation. This War affected people in all parts of the World as well as reaching into the small towns like Westminster. New farm machinery became a priority item, all farmers had to "make do" or improvise when parts were not obtainable. Although the War ended in 1945, it was several years before industry was completely converted to peace time production again. Priorities were still in effect in some areas in the early 1950's as the economy was affected by the Korean War and subsequently the War in Vietnam.

Each of Westminster's three communities paid tribute to its World War II veterans by erecting Honor Roll Plaques. George Taylor took the leadership in developing a "Memorial Circle" at the intersection of Rte 121 and Gage Street in North Westminster as a personal tribute in memory of his son who was killed in Service. While Mr. Taylor lived he assumed the responsibility of keeping the grass mowed and cared for the shrubs and flowers appropriately planted at the base of the Honor Roll Plaque. This responsibility has been continued by the North Westminster Improvement Society.

The Maple Grove Grange sponsored the Honor Roll in the West Parish under the leadership of Charles E. Minard. A large native rock, appropriately shaped, for a monument was erected on the Library lawn in the Village, with a bronze plaque bearing the names of those veterans who lived in the west part of town when entering the Service.



The right wall in the entrance hall of the Westminster Institute is the location of the large bronze plaque Roll of Honor listing the names of the Veterans from the East Parish who served their country in World War II.

*WORLD WAR II VETERANS—WESTMINSTER INSTITUTE PLAQUE*

Charles Aiken	Joseph N. Kissell	Forrest Parry
Lyle Aiken	Stephen Kissell	Ralph Potter
William Avery	William Kissell	Robert Potter
Ernest Beam Jr.	James Knight	Raymond Powers
Leonard Boudrieau	Edgar Lucas	Leon Roy
Harold Carroll	Kenneth Lucas	Tecumseh Sherman
Robert Farnsworth	John MacLeod	John Stone
Lynn Fullam Jr.	Eugene Metcalf	Gerald Sweet
Carroll Goodnough	Paul Metcalf	Harrison Ude
Harry Guillow	Joseph Moshinski	Theodore Vaine
Herbert Hall	Elmer Moore	John Watson
Hollis Harlow	Lewis Moore Jr.	Chester Wilcox
Lawrence Harlow	Clifford Morris	Christian Wilcox
Ralph Harlow	Joseph Narkiewicz	Frederick Williams
Roger Harlow	Elmer Nichols	Richard Williams
James Holton	Merton Nichols	Cassius Wright
William Holton	William Nichols	Daniel Wright
Ralph Jones	John Paligo	Fay Wright
Anthony B. Kissell	Joseph Paligo	Henry Wright
Anthony F. Kissell	Walter Paligo	Rodney Wright
Bernard Kissell	John Parda	Walter Wright
Frank Kissell	William Parda	Anthony Zielinski
John Kissell	Theodore Parker	Felix Zielinski
Joseph F. Kissell		

*NORTH WESTMINSTER HONOR ROLL—WORLD WAR II*

*Memorial Circle (Gageville)*

Francis H. Allen	Albert D. Bushey	Helen L. Gay
John Allen	Charles L. Clark	Robert L. Gay
Raymond R. Allen	Francis E. Clark	Glenn Gibbs
William A. Allen	George E. Clark	Joseph M. Harty
Harold F. Ball	Lewis S. Clark	Patrick H. Harty
Ernest Beam	Arthur W. Clough	Vincent S. Harty
Harold L. Beam	Erwin L. Cowing	Albert J. Hinds
John Beam	Renouf Dean	Julian Kabara
Winthrop Beam	Harvey D. Dubois	Toefil A. Kabara
Freeman Bigelow	Roderick Gage	Edward C. Kent
Catherine H. Breslend	Thurlow D. Fergerson	Ernest G. Kent

Robert J. Lafley	Howard H. Rhoades	Walter L. Taylor*
Arthur J. Morse	Bertrand S. Roby*	Harold F. Thompson
Ralph H. Morse	Robert H. Roby*	Gene Tierney
Edward P. Morse	George E. Roys	Ruel K. Thayer
Walter H. Muzzey	Alfred N. Shore	Ruel Weston
William B. Muzzey	Elizabeth M. Shore	Cassius I. Wilson Jr.
Howard Reed	Francis H. Shore	Frank Wilson
Kendall H. Reed	William I. Shore	Frederick I. Wilson
Wallace Reed	Cleon H. Smith	Sanford R. Wilson
Wendall C. Reed	Lloyd A. Smith	Harold R. Wyman
Percy Rhicard*	Dana Spicer	

*WESTMINSTER WEST HONOR ROLL—WORLD WAR II*  
*Village Library Lawn*

Erected in Honor of the Men and Women from This Parish Who Served  
Our Country in World War II

Genevive Austin	Hayden Fisher	George Hamilton
Arthur Bensenhaver	Robert French	Leon Hitchcock
Douglas Bensenhaver*	William Frink	Otis Reed
Marion Bensenhaver	Richard Goodell	James Roland
Oscar Bissell	Richard Goodrich	Stuart Simonds
Ronald Clark	William Haines	

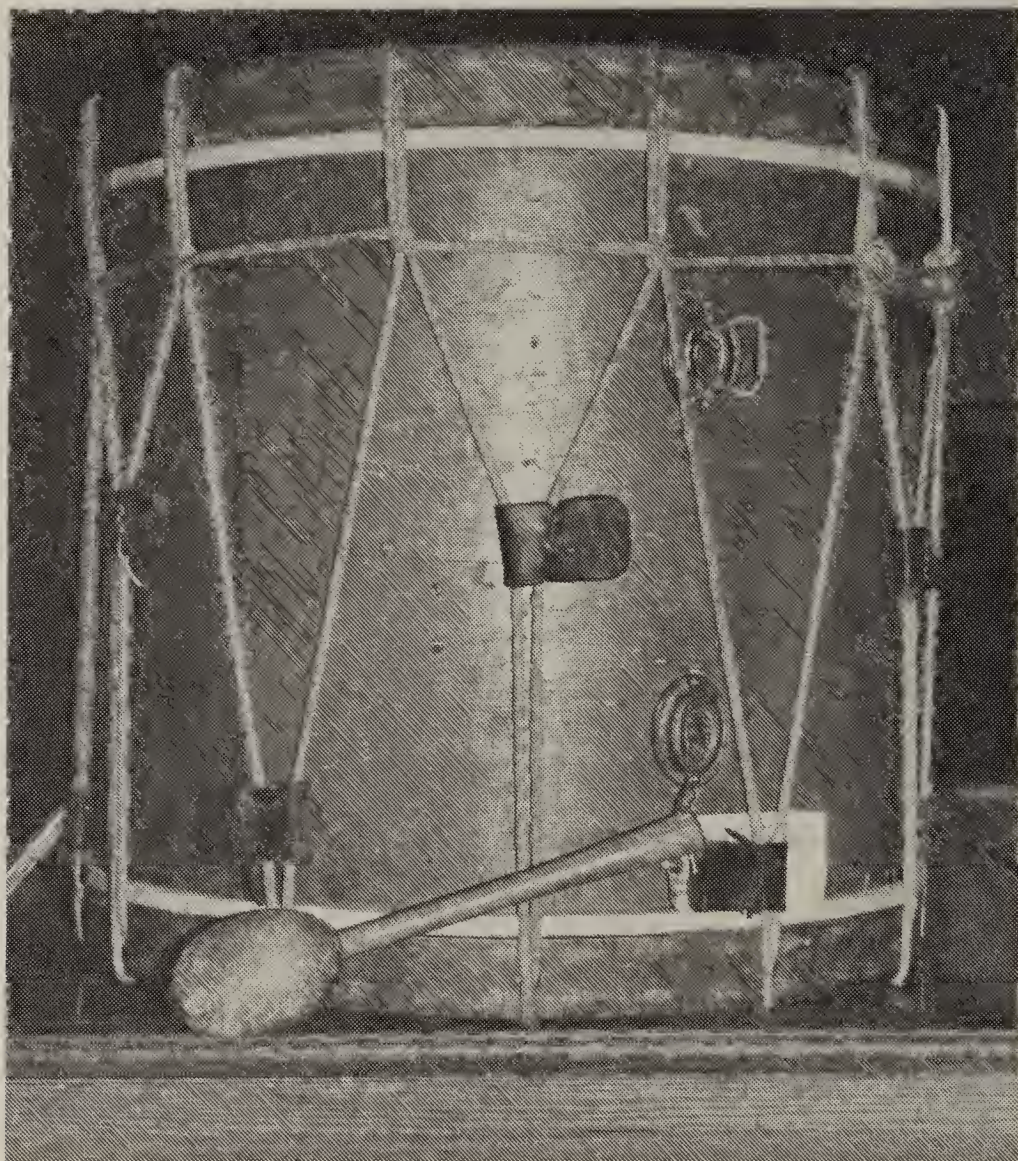
*"Let us not forget, ever these brave men and women who gave their best  
and all to keep the democratic way of life. We must continue the struggle  
for peace and freedom where they left off; so that their sacrifices shall  
not have been in vain".*

\*died in service

*Westminster Historical Society*

The Historical Society was first organized in 1941, Vermont's sesqui-centennial year. Bertha Miller Collins was the instigator. The first officers were: President, Elizabeth Minard Simonds; Vice President, Bertha Miller Collins; Secretary, Marion Nutting; Treasurer, Fay Wright. During the tenure of these officers the society was incorporated April 2, 1962. Twelve charter members were the subscribers to the corporation: Elizabeth Minard Simonds, Fay E. Wright, Marion Nutting, Wilfred Leach, Mary Foster





This drum was at the Court House Affray March 13, 1775, and belonged to the First Military Company organized in Westminster. Drum was given to Fred I. Lane by the late Bradford Cutler.

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Westminster Historical Museum (*opposite page*)

\*Among the items on display is the original stage curtain, in the background, handpainted and signed by C. W. Henry. At left is the gown worn by Mrs. W. C. Bradley in the 1820's at a White House Ball when Andrew Jackson was President. She also danced with Daniel Webster. Mr. Bradley was a Congressman from Vermont.





Fullam, Stanley Fullam, Clarence Torrey, Laura Ranney, Arthur Ranney, Fred Harlow, Frank Sawyer, Martha Wright Sawyer. Legal assistance was donated by Atty. Osmer Fitts, Brattleboro. Well known for his interest in Vermont history, he was particularly interested in Westminster from his long association with the Willard family and as a lawyer was interested in the preservation of the William Czar Bradley Law Office as a Vermont Historic Site in the years ahead.

The Westminster Institute had a small room in the basement with a collection of early artifacts, either as gifts or on loan. It was not suitable for use as a museum. When the first renovations on the first floor of the Town Hall were being made, Kay Hooker Palmer, then President of the Society, requested space to be used by the Historical Society for display area as well as meeting space. The Trustees at the Westminster Institute granted permission for the collection of artifacts to be moved to the Town Hall. The "kitchen" no longer used as such, was converted under the leadership of Mrs. Palmer, into a museum. However, acquisitions soon overflowed into the meeting room, glass enclosed cases were used for displays. When the new Union High School was built in 1970, Westminster discontinued using the large hall upstairs for annual town meetings, due to lack of space, and moved to the High School Auditorium for all town-wide meetings. The Historical Society was given permission to move the museum upstairs where there was more space for displays. The curator is Kay Palmer. It is open on Sunday afternoons during the summer months to visitors, and on special occasions.

Mrs. Palmer also was instrumental in having the large granite watering trough moved to its present location on the Town Hall lawn. It had been moved from its original site on Court House Hill, when the "Kings Highway" was widened for traffic needs, and stored behind the Town Hall. The Willard Family were the donors and it was placed at a suitable location on Court House Hill to provide water for horses to quench their thirst and rest on the long haul up the hill.

Westminster celebrated Vermont's bicentennial year in 1976. The Historical Society, under the leadership of Ward Stanton, sponsored the program of activities, commencing in 1975, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the "Westminster Massacre". Part of the funding was received from a Grant through the Historic Sites Preservation Dept.

The Bicentennial "Festival Committee" co-chaired by Lewis and Virginia Clark was responsible for having two replicas of the Court House constructed by Dorothy Metros. The first model 20" x 20" was sent to the Vermont Historical Museum in Montpelier as a gift from the town of Westminster. The second model 40" x 40" was presented to the Westminster Historical Society and is on display in the Town Hall Museum. Both models were scaled 1-1 foot.

The final Festival Committee event was an "Independence Ball" held at the Westminster Armory in Jan. 1977, commemorating Vermont's 200th anniversary of the State's Declaration of Independence made at Westminster in January 1777. Festivities covered a total period of 3 years in reviving



the early history of Westminster. An album, recording all the activities, including news releases and photographs taken has been filed in the town vault for a permanent record of Westminster's part in Vermont's celebration of its bicentennial year. The Bicentennial Committee presented the town with two large trestle style pine pegged tables and five arm chairs (labeled with plaques) for the conference area in the Town Hall, from extra funds raised to commemorate the year. The balance of \$36.26 was presented to the Board of Selectmen to establish a Savings Account to be known as "the Tricentennial Fund" to be used towards the funding of a celebration in the year 2076.

The Westminster Historical Society present officers are: President, Mrs. Katherine Palmer; Vice President, Mrs. Mildred Freeman; Secretary, Miss Lois Freihofer; Treasurer, Mrs. Phyllis Norman; Curator, Mrs. Katherine Palmer.

### *Houses*

The first settlers erected log cabins to live in during the process of cutting virgin timber and clearing the land in staking out claims and grants. Often times several men would share a cabin and "victuals". Stonewalls were built with the rocks found on the land, to serve as boundary lines. Records show that usually these pioneers would leave during the cold winter months, returning home to join their families in the permanent settlements of the Bay State Colonies, mostly likely it was Taunton, the first grantees of Westminster being from that area.

Granting of the Charter in 1752 and provision of specific rules and regulations for the development of the approximately six mile square area with the range lines running north and south and the lot lines running east and west, usually in 40, 80 and 100 acre lot sizes, Westminster became a rapid growing community. People were attracted here from many older established provinces to the east in New Hampshire, and to the south, particularly Massachusetts and Connecticut. Migratory sources are proven in genealogical research. Descendants of these early settlers, were among the first, in the 1800's to migrate from here to New York State, Ohio and Illinois. In the 1850's when the "gold rush" period was peaking, many of the home farms were deserted as the young family packed up and left to move west, to meet the challenges of the new "frontiers". Towns in Vermont went into what we call, today, a "recession". Consequently, many of the small hill farms were merged into larger farm acreages as the fifty and one hundred acre lots were "put up" for sale. Title searching has revealed this type of transfer in the accumulation of land deeds to one's property, particularly during the late 1800's. Old cellar holes remain as a reminder as to where the houses were located.

The houses built in the 1700's in the hilly areas were usually one story or one and a half story, "cape cod" style of architecture. A central chimney was built with fireplaces back to back for heating. The room, where the family spent most of its daily living time, included brick ovens. A large



crane in the fireplace was used to hang the iron kettles when cooking over the fire. A deep wide hearthstone in front of the fireplace accommodated the three-footed cauldrons to keep the food warm after removed from the fire.

These early houses were, for the most part, the four post beam type of construction. In the first stages of the building the four corner post beams were erected in a vertical position from the foundation sills to the eaves to form the four corners of the house. On completion of the inside the open beams were covered but would still be in evidence in each corner room of the house. However, as the homeowners family increased so did the size of its house, provided the owner was prosperous. Ells and additions were built on to the Cape Cod. Roofs were raised and dormer windows added. The house now no longer appears to resemble the style of the Cape Cod. The method used in locating the original authentic structure is checking for the four corner posts, provided the house is of early vintage.

There are numerous indications that consideration of weather was an influencing factor in the choice of site locations when building a house, especially on the higher elevations. The theory being, protection against the cold winter weather. In observation of these early houses it is noted the majority were built in east-west directions with windows mostly facing to the south and east to absorb the heat from the sun into the rooms. Some old houses are found nestled on a southern slope with hills to the north. Others have an eastern exposure with a natural protection from the west and north by the hills. Also, the large barns were built on the north or west side adjacent to the farm house. Barn yards were usually found on the south side of a barn to protect the animals from cold winds coming "down from the north" on winter days. Animals were always "turned out" into the barnyard during a sunny day for water and fresh air, particularly the "milking cows". Utilization of natural solar energy in the 1800's could well be recognized as the forerunner of today's energy conservation methods but, improved upon through the scientific knowledge and modern techniques acquired in this century.

Prosperity prompted the construction of new spacious homes. New arrivals in the 1800's appeared to have acquired wealth from early investments in the colonies along the coasts where the "cities" were flourishing and growing. The large rectangular two story house with chimney's on either or both ends of the house became the popular style in architectural design. Fireplaces were located on the outside walls of a room as opposed to the earlier central chimney style. Also, fireplaces were built on the second level, each house having at least four fireplaces for heating purposes. Later, ell's or one story extensions were built to the rear of these houses. Continued expansion included carriage sheds as well as the wood sheds.

To avoid going outside into the early winter cold mornings or shoveling of the snow at that early hour after a snowstorm, the expansion of sheds continued until it was attached to the barn. This kind of building construction is still in evidence and is a familiar scene in Vermont. The long

covered porches or "piazza" running along two sides of the house (but rarely the north side) is another means of combating weather conditions. In the summer the first floor rooms were shaded from the direct rays of the sun, in winter, less need in shoveling of paths. Quite often clothes lines were strung from post to post on the "piazza" to enable clothes to be hung outdoors for drying even in rainy weather. Also, if a sudden rain storm appeared on the horizon no worry about the clothes getting wet from the rain. This might well be called, "Vermont ingenuity".

The same principles used in energy saving are now being given vital consideration in the present energy crisis. But, man has now developed sophisticated techniques and methods for storage of the sun's heat in the various solar heating systems. Every new home built in Westminster today, has some form of solar heat system. Older houses, including some of the very early houses, have found it feasible to install solar units on the roofs facing south, due to the fact that our ancestral house builders gave consideration to utilization of the sun's heat rays in site location. Both of Westminster's elementary school buildings have solar heating units installed on the south outside walls. Concentration on solar heat usage in public buildings is also attributed to the national energy crisis. Once again there is a tremendous influx of cast iron stoves of various models, shapes and sizes for heating with the use wood as the fuel. History repeats, as in the days of old, cord wood piles are stacked in the "door yards" and woodsheds are back in use for keeping the wood dry, as it was at the turn of the century. The cost of wood now ranges from \$50.00 to \$100.00 a cord, depending on quality, hard or soft, green or dry, length of cut and delivery. The modern woodsman is very sophisticated in supplying wood to the public. Chimney fires are more prevalent as the present generation adjusts to the use of a wood stove and care of chimneys. Safety precautions and smoke draft information is handed out by the Insurance companies to customers. Oldtimers knew the routine as "a way of life" fifty years ago.

A "Windham Region Historic Resources Program" was initiated in 1974 in cooperation with the Vermont Division of Historic Sites by the Windham (county) Regional Commission. The purpose of the program was preservation rather than restoration or reconstruction of the historical and cultural foundation of a community. The focus was on an inventory of existing evidence by identifying historic sites and structures in selected towns within the County.

The survey documented bridges, buildings, (public/private), and farm complexes, to show the integral relationship in the growth of a town and provide a basis for future planning from defining what it is about the architectural character of each town that makes it unique.

Westminster was one of the towns selected to be surveyed. Elizabeth Minard Simonds served as a consultant working with two graduate students in historic preservation, Ann Derry and Terry Winters, in identifying historic sites and structures located throughout the town. The students did the research focusing on the architectural design and time period of construction. It was a summer program and with five towns

involved the students were limited timewise in checking for accuracy, thus, in many instances, the information regarding the historical background of a building has been inaccurately recorded by the students in the survey report.

Since the early 1960's Westminster has felt the impact of the "housing boom". The trend in the building of houses in this era has been geared to a more leisurely way of life with emphasis on recreation, mechanical devices for automation, particularly in the modern kitchen with its dishwasher, microwave oven, garbage disposal to mention a few. Instead of cellars with a section walled off for a "root cellar" and storage for canned foods, are heated basements with recreation rooms with a section partitioned for use as a laundry with an automatic washer and dryer plus an area for a frozen food freezer.

The usual two story house of the early 1900's has been replaced with long rambling structures with all the rooms on one floor, sometimes called "ranch houses" in architectural design, with not one but two car garages attached with a "breezeway" leading into the house. The traditional clapboard or shingle covered house has been replaced with vinyl siding, and barnboards applied in vertical rows as the outside finish of house, usually stained instead of painted for preservation of the boards. The houses vary not only in size but in shape today, the A frame has been popular, hexagonal with windows at every angled side, wooden outside doors have given way to thermal pane glass sliding doors, covered porches to open "decks" and yards to enclosed patios for outdoor living. Modern insulation has overcome the necessity for giving consideration to site location which was considered so important a century ago. However, insulation and energy conservation is still a prime factor in today's construction of a house. It will remain that way as long as the country is faced with the present energy crisis. Also, there is the modular home and the trailer style home. These types of homes appeal to older persons who prefer to spend the winter months in warmer climates but like to return to Vermont for the summer. They also appeal to the urbanite who likes to vacation in the country or as weekend homes.

It might be said that creative and innovative designs appear to be the trend in modern house construction. Particularly when a barn is converted into a house, and that is the trend in some parts of the town where farming has been discontinued and the land subdivided into building lots. In 1970 these trends caused much concern to many of Westminster citizens and the planning commission, regarding architectural design in the traditional parts of town. The result is the establishment of the so-called "historic mile" within the confines of the East Parish village, by vote taken at the annual town meeting.



*Title Searching*

Title searching an old house back to the year when it was built has become a fascinating pastime for many "old home" owners. Sometimes the early property deeds do not mention dwellings, only the land acquisitions which makes it difficult to locate the accurate date. Therefore, the architectural design of a house helps establish the approximate time period in which it was built.

In the southwest section of town (West Parish) located on one of the early roads leading over the eighth range into the town of Brookline, is the home of Edward H. Dodd Jr., reputed to be one of the oldest houses in Windham County. He has done an extensive title search on his property but found no record as to when the house was actually built.

Entitled, Genealogy of Lot number 1, Eighth Range, Westminster, Vt. 1732-1960, are the results of the research as recorded by Ed Dodd, the present owner:

1732 Zachariah Tarbell to William Wilder. (Apparently later transferred from William Wilder to William Wilder Jr. at uncertain date, presumeably on his death).

1792 William Wilder, Jr. to his son, Levi Wilder.

1844 Rufus M. Benson and Levi Wilder to Jabez Miller.

(Rufus had arranged to "lease" the Lot from Levi (1827?) but was not to take possession until Levi's death. One might guess that Levi lived longer than Rufus expected because they sold out jointly to Jabez before Levi died).

Jabez was of course Levi's next door neighbor and according to my recollection of a talk with Mr. Cory about 1950, it was Levi's daughter who had married Jabez' son and was thrown from a wagon with her baby opposite the Quintard's (formerly the Earl Fuller place) where the stone marker still stands. The mother was killed because she enfolded the baby and thus could not break her fall. The baby was not harmed.

1851 Jabez Miller to Loren L. Ranney. (Not recorded until 1855).

1864 Loren Ranney to Lyman Miller

1872 Lyman Miller to George M. Cory. (Father of Clifford Cory).

1882 George M. Cory to Calvin Reed.

(Apparently transferred from Calvin to his son William C. Reed when Calvin died about 1925).

1950 Willie Reed Estate to Edward H. Dodd.

(Not recorded until 1951. Willie Reed died in the summer, I think, of 1949).

Cliff Cory, son of George Cory, told Mr. Dodd that the land was home-

steaded in 1770 and the house appeared on a map in 1780. The windows have 9/6 sash and the interior boards are laid with feather and groove, indicating architecturally to Anne Derry, in the 1974 survey research, that 1772 was the probable dte. The house stands on one of the original 80 acre lots, possibly land cleared by Zachariah Tarbell prior to 1732 in staking out his claim. This Lot was included in the 250 acres (more or less) purchased by Mr. Dodd. He states, "adjacent parcels all have their own histories, separate and intermingled".



*Edward H. Dodd Jr. residence*

*Architectural Styles—Period Examples*

"GORHAM HOUSE"—reputed to be one of the oldest of its design in town was built by David Gorham, son of Capt. Matthias Gorham. Capt. Gorham arriving here by ox cart, from Yarmouth, Mass. in 1789, paid \$4,000 in gold and silver for the farm, buying the land from a Mr. Ide. Across the road and up the hill to the west is found the family cemetery of the Ides. The farm remained in the Gorham family for three generations, at least, Freeman Gorham being the last to hold ownership.

Present owners—David and Martha Riley. David is a playwright, writings based on historical facts.

Location—Hickory Ridge Road, West Parish

1838—5 bayed main block with gable dormer, has 1½ story ell (once carriage barn) with simple eyebrow windows. Sash 6/6. Doorway has simple entablature and side lights. Small entrance porch added to ell. It has a "ball room" finished with plaster on second floor.





*"HIDDEN SPRINGS FARM"*—Henry Crowell was the owner in 1869. Followed by Clark, McIlhenny, and Webster. Indications are the present road to the house extended, at one time, further to the north connecting with the so-called Bemis Hill Road which runs parallel to Hitchcock Road both starting from the main road leading to Saxton's River. Bemis Hill road continues on over the hill to Athens.

Present Owner—Cecil Millberry.

Location—off Hitchcock Road which begins opposite the former Dist #3 Brookside School, West Parish.

*ca 1800*—Large central chimney, 5 bayed cape with 1 story shed wing to side which now includes porch and kitchen. Possibly the homestead farm of the Crowell family and house built by a Crowell. Records show Crowells migrating to West Parish from Cape Cod in 1798. The Hitchcocks arrived around 1780, and homesteaded at a higher elevation.

*"FRED HARLOW HOUSE"*—formerly the F.O. Dunham residence. Dunham was a manufacturer of carriages. Arthur Harlow, father of Fred, purchased the property around the turn of the century. Fred's father operated it as a 'village farm' supplying the neighbors with milk, cream, butter and eggs. In the summer the home was open to paying guests from the city, forerunner of the "Tourist Home". A few years ago Fred had the barn taken down. Fred, who is now in his eighties, spent his childhood here and it is "home" to him.

Present owner—Fred H. Harlow

Location—Main Street, West Parish

*ca 1850*—5 bayed 1½ story Gothic Revival Cottage with central peak intercepting gable over central bay. Corner pilasters. Later jig-saw cut verandah. Double window with pointed Gothic arches over central door.







*BASIN FARM HOUSE*—Original owner was Sabin, followed by Bancroft, Thompson, Will Pierce, G. Preston James, Preston James, Clayton Goodell. At one time the farm property extended into the village of Bellows Falls and included the huge red barn at the top of Hospital Hill.

Present owner—David F. Buckley etals.

Location—off Forest Road, Gageville (North Westminster).

*Built between 1830 and 1840*—Bayed main block has 1½ story side ell with gable dormer. Original sash 6/6. Entrance porch with illiptical arch, clapboarded spandrels, supported on crude columns. Doorway has transom light with frosted glass and sidelights. Corner pilasters. Two story 1917 addition to ell, two small stove chimneys and interior end chimney also added in 1917.

*“HOLTON HOUSE”* Joel Holton came to Westminster in the 1760’s along with the Wrights and others from Connecticut. This house has changed ownership many times but finally returned to the family name when purchased by William Holton, a direct descendant of Joel. In 1978, William and Betty Holton converted four upper rooms in the ell part into an apartment, with a separate outside entrance and live in this part of the house. Young Joel and family occupy the main section.

Present owner: Joel Holton (son of William) and wife Wilhelmina.

Location: east side of Main Street, near Court House Hill, East Parish  
*ca 1790*—5 bayed 2 story house with hipped roof. Sash 6/6, 2/2, 9/6 and 6/4. Entranceway has denticulated cornice and 2 slender engaged pilasters to either side of door.





*"DR. ELMER HOUSE"*—Built by Dr. R. S. Elmer, who occupied it during his life time. He was a dentist, practicing in Bellows Falls.

Present owner—Norman Silberdick

Location—Westminster Terrace (one of the glacial terraces) overlooking the Basin Farm.

1894—Assymetrical Shingle Style house with projecting central section of facade. Side porch with Tuscan Columns. Gothic hood over front door carried on wooden consoles. Sash 12/1, and 6/1: double-hung Palladian window on front facade. One of the few examples of Shingle Style architecture in Westminster.







*FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH PARSONAGE*—adjacent to Church (south side) East Parish.

*ca 1865*—3 bayed, 1½ story Gothic Revival house with intersecting gable roof, peak over entranceway. Scalopped bargeboard under cornice. Small entrance porch. Sheds extending to the rear and attached to barn. Considered to be the original site location of the First Printing Office in Vermont. It was established by the firm of Spooner & Green in 1778.

*"JESSIE JUDD HOUSE"*—Originally the home of Rev. Charles Dickinson, distinguished graduate of Harvard College. Both he and his wife were natives of Westminster. In 1893 he started the New England Kurn Hattin Home for boys. It became the home of Miss Jessie Judd in the early 1900's. She was a teacher, later serving as Principal of Bellows Falls High School until her retirement. She continued living here the rest of her life.

Present owner—Arthur Berry, President, Bellows Falls Trust Company  
Location—Main Street, west side, East Parish.

*ca 1805*—Possibly the first and only brick with slate roof erected in the village of Westminster in the early 1800's. Brick work unusual: cornice forming pedimented gable end and is entirely brick, irregular bonding. Brick lintels and relieving arches over doorways. Shuttered fanlight over front door and in end of gable. Sash 6/6. Wooden arch trellis over side door removed. Inside, huge soap stone hearths: had soapstone water pipes. Beams both milled and hand hewn, wide floor boards. Door enframements vary: some are simple wide and square, others fluted trim with corner blocks. Very old door in basement with beveled joinery.





*"LOUISE CRUM HOUSE"* Louise Crum purchased this house in 1925. It was formerly the home of Abby Holton Buck and daughter Maxine. Miss Crum lived here for over twenty years and was very active in the community. She was involved in the management and operation of a Tea Room located in the Westminster Inn, next door to the Westminster Institute. The Inn burned to the ground in the late 1940's and was never rebuilt as an Inn.

Present owner—Matthew/Emily Blunt

Location—Corner of Grout and Main Street, East Parish

*ca 1790*—5 bayed, 2½ story house with wooden quoins and denticulated cornices with consoles. Slate gabled roof. Semi-enclosed entrance porch. Doorway has fluted pilasters and transom window.







*"EMIL M. MATTSON HOUSE"*—Mr. Mattson title searched and established 1797 as year house was built. He purchased this house in the 1920's and was active in public office (overseer of poor, town agent, Assistant town clerk). He was a musician, playing in one of the Military Bands during his tour of duty in the World War I era.

Present owner—Robert W./Janet McIver

Location—Main Street, west side, East Parish

1797—Simple 5 bayed, 2½ story Colonial House with a one story side ell and carriage house (now converted to barn with garage). Small pedimented entrance porch.



*"MARY FULLAM HOUSE"* Research indicated "House Lots 32 & 33" were owned by Henry & Sarah Kellogg, prior to 1858. Austin & Harriet Goodridge's deed of purchase, dated 10/12/1858 makes no mention of a dwelling, indicating the house was built by the Goodridges. On a later deed to the property, it is referred to as the "Mansion House". Sometime during the Goodridge ownership (1858-1903) it is reputed to have been a private school for girls. Mary Fullam's mother, Annie M. Foster, bought the property in 1910 and deed was transferred to Mary in 1911. Fullam's lived here until it was sold to Warren & Isabelle Potter in 1946.

Present owner—Richard D./Janet R. Pagodin

Location—West side, Main Street, East Parish

*ca 1860-70*—3 bayed, 2½ story Italianate house, gable end to street, with 2 story rear ell. Sash 2/2, Bullseye window under gable end. Second story central bay window has overhang with carved "skirt" supported on brackets. 1 story front porch. Entrance door has molded trim and patterned glass sidelights. Cornice of roof and porch have mutules. House is one of the outstanding architectural components of the Kings Highway District.



*"THE NUTTING HOUSE"*—Life long home of Carrie Fenn Nutting. Lydia J. Fenn deeded the house to daughter Carrie, March 30, 1907. Remained in the Nutting family until the 1970s, Marion Nutting, daughter of Carrie, being the last Nutting in ownership.

Present owner—Michael Fawcett, Teacher, Bellows Falls Union High School

Location—Main St, west side, East Parish

*ca 1870*—3 bayed, 2½ story Gothic Revival house with strongly emphasized gable front and pointed arch dormer window. Windows have small, peaked lintels and 6/6 sash. 1 story entrance porch.





*"FAYETTE WARD HOUSE"*—Owned by Professor Fayette Ward in 1850, who operated a private school here known as the 'Academy'. It is said pupils attended from all around New England. The house may well have been built according to plans drawn by the Professor. Beers Atlas of 1869 indicates Ward as Principal, Powers Institute, Bernardston, Mass., but still owner of the house.

Present owner—Cora Bemis Jennison

Location—South side, School Street, East Parish.

*ca 1850*—3 bayed 2½ story house with L-shaped plan and tower at the intersection of the two wings. Tower has mansard roof. Two front doors: one in tower, a bracketed pedimented doorway with transom window, the other a double front door with molded trim and simple entablature. Bay windows on side elevation of main block and ell. L-shaped veranda around front of main block, Mutules under cornices of roof, verandah and bay windows. Four small chimneys.



*"JOHN A. LEPPMAN HOUSE"*—A graduate of UVM Medical School, Dr. Leppman located in this area in 1976 and established a medical practice in Bellows Falls. His speciality is Internal Medicine. Born and raised in New Jersey, his various family and personal interests in Vermont, influenced his decision to establish his practice here. In addition to his professional interests, he is an ardent student of Vermont history and a genealogical researcher, doing many book reviews for the Genealogical Society of Vermont's publications. House is built on land geologically considered one of the higher glacial terraces west of the Basin Farm.

Present owner—Dr. John A. Leppman

Location—"Spring Lot" of the John L. Thwing Farm (40A) purchased March 26, 1894 from Ann L. Hapgood Est. Presently called, "Oak Hill Terrace", North Westminster.

1979 Designed by Kevin Jeffrey, Cold River Designs, specialist in solar designs.

Robert Phillips, North Westminster, was the contractor for building the house. The tall dark panels on the front (south) face are called thermosyphons; briefly, they draw cooler air from the lower story of the house, warm it by solar radiation, and deliver it to the upper story through vents. Since the warm air rises through the panel, no fan is required, although there is a fan inside the house that helps move the warmer air back down to the lower floor. The foundation and large central chimney of the house are designed to hold onto solar and other heat. Good insulation helps save heat also. Almost all the heat the house needs is provided by the solar arrangement and a wood stove. The panels in the roof are for hot water heating and (through a separate system from the air heating panels) more than half of the hot water supply—nearly all of it in the summer—is solar heated.





*MINARD HOMESTEAD—WESTMINSTER WEST* (Taken around 1907) John Minard, oldest son of Isaac Minard (Rockingham, Vt.) married Caroline Webb in 1824, settled the land (150 acres), building this house, on the hillside overlooking the valley, just south of the Rockingham town line. Four generations of Minards lived here. The last Minard owner was Charles E. Minard. He sold the property in the early 1930's. Shown in the photo is Mrs. Charles E. Minard (Lucy Taylor), son, John Putney Minard, sitting in hammock.

(Mary) Elizabeth Minard Simonds, great granddaughter of John and Caroline (Webb) Minard, continues a family tradition, being actively engaged in Civic and Town affairs. Elected to the Westminster Development Committee in 1953, served as its first Chairman until 1963. Elected Trustee of Public Funds and Trustee of Campbell Fund in 1956, served until 1962. Currently, Chrmn, Bridge Study Committee, coordinating with the New Hampshire State Highway Dept., relative to replacement of the bridge over the Connecticut river between Westminster and Walpole, N.H. Listed in Who's Who of American Women; The World Who's Who of Women since 1973.







### *POSTAL SERVICES*

No records have been found that give the date and where the first Post Office was established in the town. It is assumed to have been located in the East Parish as records state Reuben Atwater received his appointment June 12, 1972. The first returns made to the Postmaster General were by Eleazer May (appt. July 1, 1795) and Phinehas T. Wales (appt. January 1, 1810).

The oldest Post Offices listed in Vermont indicate there were nineteen prior to 1800. Bennington being number one was in existence on November 26, 1783, followed by Brattleboro and Rutland in 1784. Westminster is number nine, dated March 20, 1794. Location date for a building was not established.

The Post Office at Westminster Station is assumed to have been opened when the Railroad Station was built. The Post Office at Westminster West was in the General Store. The owner of the store was usually the Postmaster. A. P. Ranney owned the store in the late 1800's. (He was a Civil War veteran). At one period his wife (Mary Clark) was Postmistress. F. Roland Chapman purchased the store in 1902 and became the Postmaster, serving until at age seventy he had to retire.

Presently two Post Offices are in existence. Westminster Station, Bernard Lawrence Jr., is Postmaster. It is located in a small building, built for this purpose, across the road from the old railroad station. In 1981, "Andy" LeClair converted the former Railroad Station into a grocery store. Previously, he had used the building as an "Auction Center" with auctions held once a week.

The Federal Post Office Department, in the 1950's adopted a policy of requiring a separate building to house Post Offices in the rural towns. The department would list towns needing a new Post Office building and advertise for bids to "contract for P.O. building construction according to Federal specifications". The builder would have to acquire the land and construct the building. The Federal Post Office Department leases the

property on a renewal basis with the owner. In 1961, George Cote entered into such a contract with the Federal Post Office Dept. at Westminster Center.

Julia S. Thompson (appt. confirmed May 12, 1949) was the Postmistress to operate the Post Office at the new location. Following her death, William B. Holton assumed charge on May 20, 1966, and was confirmed as Postmaster on October 2, 1967. He is the present Postmaster.

The West Parish, Morse Brook area and south sections of the town are served by Rural Free Delivery with Routes #1 and #3 out of Putney Post Office. Daily deliveries are made in North Westminster from the Bellows Falls Post Office. Hartley Hill and Kimball Hill areas have boxes at the Saxton's River Post Office.

*Westminster, Windham County, Vermont. Date of establishment is not given.*

*Postmasters*

*Appointment Dates Thru  
September 30, 1971*

Reuben Atwater	June 12, 1792
Eleazer May	*July 1, 1895
Phinehas T. Wales	*January 1, 1810
Aaron Wailes (sic)	January 24, 1811
Isaac Holton	December 11, 1815
Henry Crawford	January 27, 1817
Horace Fletcher	March 28, 1819
William F. Hall	May 3, 1822
Jonathan D. Bradley	October 6, 1823
Edmund Burke	January 29, 1928
Samuel Lovejoy	April 19, 1830
Pliny Safford	March 29, 1832
Henry C. Lane	December 30, 1856
Clark Chase	September 19, 1860
Austin Goodridge	December 21, 1869
Benjamin F. Sleeper	August 14, 1885
George H. Albee	August 14, 1889
Benjamin F. Sleeper	October 26, 1893
George H. Walker	April 27, 1897
F. Henry Davis	January 26, 1909
Clarence E. Wright	March 31, 1922
George H. Walker	June 1, 1926
Margaret W. Bent	December 11, 1926
Miss Florence E. Metcalf	July 1, 1927
Albert C. Moore	June 6, 1934 (confirmed)
Mrs. Eva L. Nichols	September 14, 1936 (assumed charge)
	September 18, 1936 (acting)
Stanley J. Nichols	March 23, 1937 (acting)
	September 11, 1937 (assumed charge)
Mrs. Clara M. Watkins	January 25, 1942 (assumed charge)
	February 11, 1942 (acting)
Mrs. Olive E. Fullam	March 15, 1942 (assumed charge)
	March 24, 1942 (acting)
Mrs. Julia S. Thompson	June 9, 1947 (assumed charge)
	May 12, 1949 (confirmed)
William B. Holton	May 20, 1966 (assumed charge)
	October 2, 1967 (confirmed)

\*Dates of the first returns of the postmasters to the Postmaster General.

## *EDUCATION*

The "district school" concept within a township, where each district furnished and paid for the pupils education (grammar school), is no longer in existence. The original fourteen districts have been consolidated down through the years until only two central elementary schools provide this level of education within the town. The philosophy being, it is more advantageous to learning and costs less to have students housed under one roof with teachers for each grade. Transportation facilities and improved highways have contributed to "centralization" in school systems. The town school district owns its own buses and has a Transportation Director. The Assistant Principal at the Westminster Center, Richard Miller, holds this position. He not only schedules the bus runs for the elementary schools but arranges for students going to the Middle School in Rockingham and the Union High School. It also includes arranging for School Field Trips or any special school bus usage.

The State Department of Education, with its increased Funding from the Federal government as well as State Aid appropriations from the State Legislature has been encouraged to promote the "centralization" philosophy, particularly at the secondary level. Towns have united and formed "Union Districts", building and maintaining one high school on a share cost basis. To be eligible for State and Federal Funding, the local schools must conform to the standards and regulations adopted by the State and Federal Agencies, dealing with education. Consequently some very large and elaborate buildings have resulted, including from five to twenty acres, more or less, of land for expansion and athletic fields. In the long range planning, the needs and building size were determined by anticipated student population and curriculum projected twenty-five to thirty years in the future.

Westminster, in the 1940's had three elementary schools: Gageville, West Parish Village and Westminster Center (East Parish). Secondary education was provided by the town paying tuition to the high school of the students choice (Vermont Academy, Putney School, Walpole etc.) The tuition paid to the town of Rockingham was the determined amount of tuition as the majority attended Bellows Falls High School.

The school in the West Parish was the first to outgrow pupil space (Grade 1-8). The town voted to build a new building in 1951, at the north end of the Village, on land from Abel Gregg, providing approximately two acres for playground and further expansion. (State requirement). The plan called for a two room building, but only one room was built as it was deemed more financially feasible, at the time, to transport the upper grades to Gageville, where there was adequate space.

In 1953, a new one level structure was built at Westminster Center on School Street. Six acres of land had been acquired from Dr. Ralph Buck. This building, with various classrooms, housed Grades<sup>o</sup> I through VIII.

After World War II, the "baby boom" began to have its effect in the



late 1950's on the schools. In Westminster, the lower grades were overcrowded. A special town meeting was called on December 4, 1963. It was voted to build an additional wing (four rooms plus an all purpose room) for a new primary grades section at the Westminster Center School. The original structure, built in 1953, was reorganized to accomodate the four upper grades with a departmentalized curriculum for the students from the three sections of town. Additional buses were purchased by the School District for transportation.

The towns of Rockingham, Westminster, Athens and Grafton voted to form school union district #27 for the purpose of building a regional high school. A committee with representatives from each town was organized to formulate the planning, acquiring land and to study all the aspects involved in building the new high school. The site chosen was in the northeast section of Westminster on one of the larger glacial terraced plateaus purchased from G. Preston James. The Hadley Athletic Field had already been constructed in the area on land purchased by the Rockingham Town School District. The building was completed and after officially dedicated, opened for classes in September, 1971. It is called the "Bellows Falls Union High School" at the request of the Bellows Falls High School Alumni Association. This new "educational plant" has featured the "Open Classroom" concept in education, prevalent throughout the country during this era.

The same four towns were combined by the State Department of Education to form the "Windham Northeast Supervisory Union". Each town has its own School Board and functions separately relative to elementary education. The Union High School Board is elected by each town, the number according to town school population in attendance at the high school. Board membership numbers is periodically updated. One Superintendent of Schools and an Assistant Superintendent serve the Supervisory Union.

The new Union High School curriculum was organized as a four year program (grades 9-12). Thus, another educational transition also took place at the opening of the 1971-72 school year. The old high school, located in the Village of Bellows Falls on School Street, was established as a "Middle School" (grades 5-8). All students in the town of Rockingham in these grades were transferred from the two elementary schools (Saxton's River, Bellows Falls Central). Athens, Grafton and Westminster transferred the seventh and eight grades from each town. Tuition is paid from the respective towns to the Town of Rockingham, owner of the building.

Gageville school was the only remaining two story school building in Westminster. New state fire safety regulations were put into effect whereby classes were not allowed on second floor levels below grade four. Further, it was ruled playground space at this school was inadequate. The school was closed in June 1976 and the remaining Grades I and II were transferred to Westminster Center. The building was sold to Consumer Controlled

Community Child Care Inc. (5 Cs Inc.) The funds from the sale were used for another one room addition, built in the summer of 1978, at the Center School.

In the mid 1960's Westminster West (West Parish) appeared to be the section of town rapidly expanding in population and houses being constructed. It was confirmed in land sales recorded and the number of new houses listed in the Grand List Book. It has shown a steady increase with farming on the decrease. Farms were purchased by investors and subdivided for resale. Some second or vacation homes were built but most have been for year-round living. Commuting, no longer a problem, the West Parish had the potential of a "bedroom" community. The sloping terrains have appealed to artists, writers, craftspeople or tradesmen as well, who can pursue a chosen profession in a home studio or shop nestled on a hillside overlooking the valleys with breathtaking views in all directions.

The West Parish Village School has been a main educational attraction to families with small children settling in this part of town. The one room concept of education with the intimacy of learning in a small community group setting, providing a closer parent-teacher-pupil relationship, is considered a basic quality in education for effective learning in the fundamental skills of the "3R's" as well as developing security in promoting well balanced growth in a child. Claire Oglesby, the teacher, recently cited by the State Dept. of Education as the "Vermont Teacher of the Year", has developed a program of learning through experiences, reaching out into the community and drawing into the school the available assets. She has utilized college students, student teachers from State colleges and talented adults in music, art, crafts, drama and athletics, to mention a few, to enhance the teaching program, and promote cultural growth as a whole. The enrollment soon exceeded the capacity of the one room building. Grades III and IV would have to be moved to provide space for Grades I and II. The School Board appeared to favor transporting them to the Center rather than building a second room which was according to the original building plan developed in 1951. Residents were concerned, would this lead to the eventual closing of this school and having one large centralized school within the town with more buses purchased for transportation.

Parents and residents in the West Parish felt the need for alternative programs in preference to complete centralization. Busing also, was becoming a problem. Some youngsters were leaving home very early in the morning (6:00 A.M.) and not returning home until around 4:30 P.M., in some cases later, if having a distance to walk after getting off the bus. Parents organized to study alternatives, resulting in the purchase of land close by the Village School by two parents and building a "shell" adaptable to classroom use. A corporation was formed called, "The Community School" and parents went to work raising money to fund the project. Prior to building the "shell", classes were held at a parent's home. Approval was





Center Elementary School (1981)



Richard Miller, Assist. Principal and Transportation Coordinator. Making sure youngsters head for home on the correct bus from Center Elem. (1981)



granted by the State Dept. of Education. Periodic inspections were made by the proper officials. Certified teachers were hired. The Alternative School was in business. Parents provided transportation. It was the beginning of the Annual Country Fair and Harvest Festival at the Goodell Farm on West Road. People came by the hundreds from far and near. Auctions, contra dancing, pageants and games with everyone participating added to the days events, as well as the treasury. A booth at Putney School Harvest Festival, food sales and other activities were some of the means for fund raising.

When the classes were moved into the new Community School building, there was adequate space for seventh and eighth graders if parents desired to have them attend in preference to being bused to the Middle School. The town would pay the same tuition to the Community School as was being paid for seventh and eighth graders attending the Middle School from Westminster. Also, a saving on bus transportation costs.

The Town School Board was again confronted with an overcrowded situation at the Center School. The Board accepted the proposal from the Community School to accept more students and in return to pay for its teachers, supplies and transportation facilities. This temporarily relieved the situation while the Center School built another one room addition in 1978, using the funds from the sale of the Gageville School. The so-called "all purpose room", heretofore used as a classroom, was converted into a gymnasium for a long needed physical education program. It was named the "John Porter Gym" in memory of long time, Principal Porter, who passed away in 1975, while still serving as the principal.

A public kindergarten program was voted at the annual town meeting in March 1978. It opened in the fall using the north wing room in the Westminster Institute. Two daily sessions were held. Classes were held here for two years, then it was transferred to the Center School where a room adjacent to the new Gym was made available plus an outside entrance. Mid-day bus transportation is provided for the two sessions, giving all five year olds an opportunity to attend kindergarten.

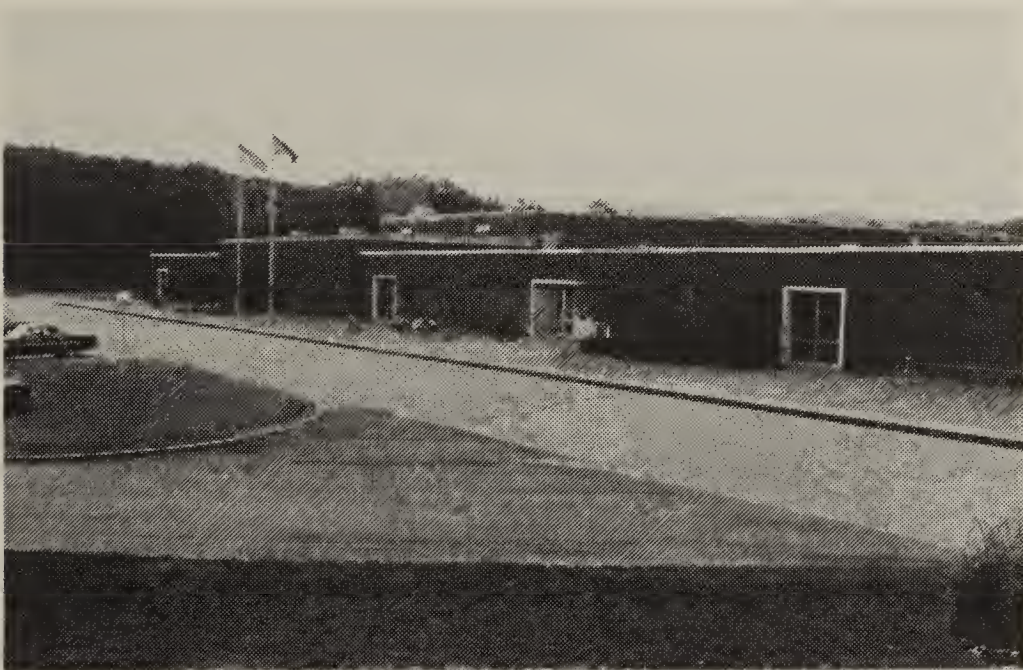
In 1979 the town voted a one room addition at the West Parish Village School. It was built in the summer of 1979, at the same time the whole building was insulated and solar panels installed on the south side of the building. In the summer of 1980, a solar addition was installed at the Westminster Center School.

The alternative "Community School" finished paying its bills and closed its doors, having served its purpose and accomplished its goals. The owners sold the property. It has been renovated and is now used as a home.

Presently Westminster has two central elementary schools: K-6th grade at Westminster Center, Grades 1-4 at West Parish Village. Seventh and eighth grades attend Rockingham Middle School or Putney Grammar School, the town paying the tuition to the respective school.



Westminster West Village School (1981)



Bellows Falls Union High School Main Entrance



*SCHOOL STAFF 1981-82**Westminster Center*

Arthur Fuleihan, Principal—Social Studies, Reading—Grades 5-6

Richard Miller, Assistant Principal—Science, Grades 3-4; Physical Education, Grades K-6

Beverly Major, Kindergarten AM

Judy Coven, Kindergarten PM

Mary Brandt, Grade I

Cheryl Cheeney, Grade I

Jean Hollar, Grade II

Robert Bruce, Grade II-III (exchange teacher from Scotland)

Eileen Pilato, Grade III

Barbara Angers, Grade IV

William Murphy, Science, Reading—Grades V-VI, Physical Education—Grades V-VI

Albert "Mac" Oglesby, Mathematics, Reading—Grades V-VI

Barbara Whitehead, Language Arts, Reading—Grades V-VI

Kay Kloppenburg, Learning Specialist

Margery Ladd, Librarian, Reading Teacher

Diane Fuleihan, Music, Grades IV, V and VI and Westminster West

Natalie Patrick, Music, Grades K-IV

Sally Holden, Grades III-IV (returning in 1982-83 from Scotland as exchange teacher)

*SUPPORT STAFF*

Margaret Nowers, Secretary

Catherine Bergann, Aide and Title I

Shirley Largess, Aide Title I

Cheryl Rounds, Aide

Jane Soulos, Learning Disabilities Assistant

Wesley Aiken, Custodian

*Westminster West Village*

Claire Oglesby, Head Teacher, Grades I-II

Anna May Vanderwoude, Grades III-IV

Sally Ryea, Aide





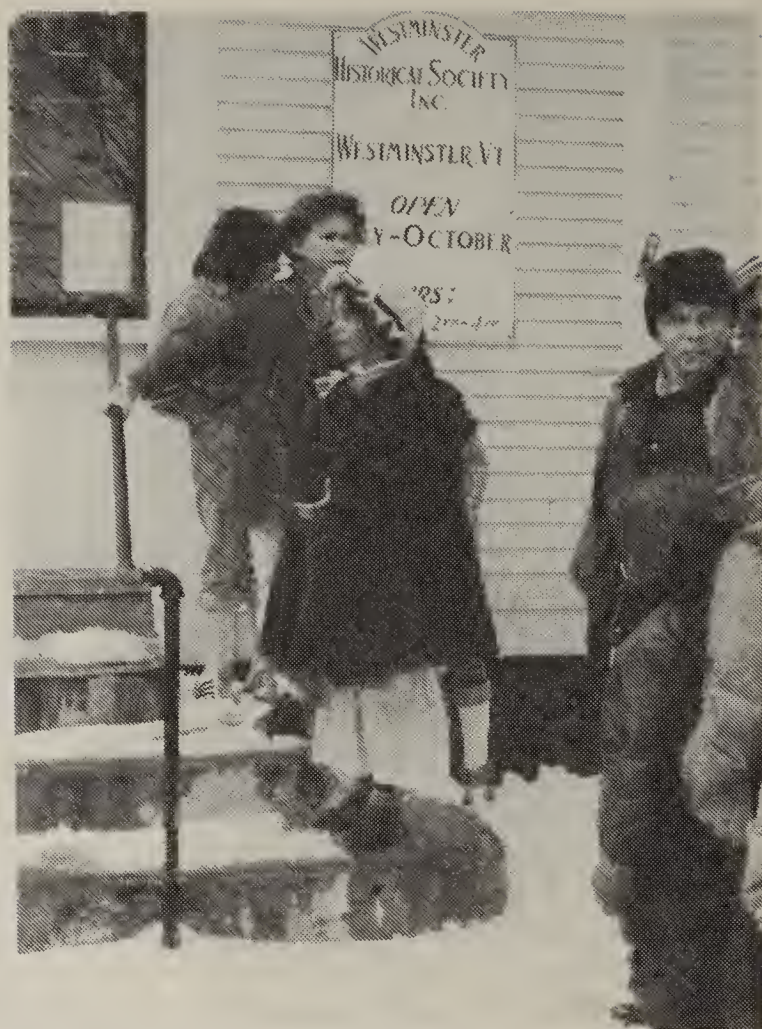
### *WESTMINSTER MASSACRE RE-ENACTMENT*

History comes alive for the sixth grade students in Westminster each spring when the children, under the guidance of the social studies teacher relive the activities that took place on March 13, 1775.

The Seth Warner Regiment of the Green Mountain State Militia, an organization based in Wilmington, Vt., initiated the re-enactment idea, when James Dassatti, Captain of the Regiment, wrote a half-hour, five act play, depicting the events of that fateful day. Two members of the Regiment, Robert and Patricia Haas, who live in the West Parish, were instrumental in bringing the Regiment to Westminster. The play begins with a meeting at the Westminster Institute. The townspeople (sixth graders) charge down the Main Street, originally called the Kings Highway, to the Town Hall (Court House) taking over the building as the Tories (Seth Warner Regiment acting this part) approach. A battle ensues resulting in the deaths of William French and Daniel Houghton.

The first re-enactment was presented to the public in the spring of the 1979-80 school year. Again, the next year. Arthur Fuleihan, principal and sixth grade social studies teacher, has now incorporated the Westminster event into the regular Social Studies curriculum concerning the history of Vermont relating to the Colonies in their declaration of independence at the time of the Revolutionary War. The present sixth grade class is preparing for the third (1981-82) presentation.





Westminster Massacre, First re-enactment participants (1979-80)



Gage Bridge, oldest and last remaining Covered Bridge was burned (arson suspected) early Sunday morning, August 13, 1967. Photo taken by Virginia Clark.

*Westminster Volunteer Fire Department*

The Volunteer Fire Department celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 1976. For the occasion a Westminster native, Howard F. Rice, one of the volunteer fireman, compiled a history of the Fire Dept. from the original inception in 1917 when seven residents made written request to the Village Clerk for action to be taken regarding fire protection, and with his permission is printed here the historical documentary of the Westminster Volunteer Fire Department researched and written by Howard F. Rice.

On June 26, 1917 a request was received by Fred Lowe, Clerk of the Village of Westminster, to call a special meeting of the village to see if the village would vote to take any action toward better fire protection and if so, to raise money to defray expenses. This request was signed by: D. P. Wright (Alfred's father—lived in Woodward' house), Henry K. Willard, S. A. Pierce (lived next to Institute), George Wright (Mrs. Sawyer's father), George Walker (owned store and lived in Torrey house), George Dascomb and George Hall (lived in Brennan's house and managed the canning factory).

In July of this year more information was needed and a committee was formed to arrange a demonstration by one or more fire extinguisher companies. Finally on November 3, 1917 at a special Village meeting it was voted to purchase a chemical fire engine at a cost not to exceed \$400. For the next twenty years different men were appointed to or volunteered for, the fire committee, who's job was to house and take charge of this chemical fire engine.

In 1922 the F. H. Davis store burned. Bellows Falls was called in to help and the Village paid \$36 for their services.

In 1933 Arthur Bemis first appeared on the fire scene as a member of the fire committee. Lynn Fullam was elected fire warden for three years in 1935. It was during this time that the Village Trustees became aware of the need for better fire protection and on December 11, 1937 they were empowered to expend a sum not to exceed \$1200 on fire fighting equipment.

The Westminster Volunteer Fire Department actually got its start on December 20, 1937 when a meeting was held at the Institute to form a fire company. Arthur Bemis chaired this meeting and appointed Clarence Torrey, John Farr, Emil Mattson, Ray Metcalf and Lynn Fullam to a committee to draw up a set of By-Laws. George Richmond was asked to see if he could get permission from the Church Committee to locate a key on the outside of the church enabling the ringing of the bell in case of fire. At a call from the chair 35 men indicated their willingness to serve as a volunteer fire company. Harold Shattuck, Robert Rice and Joseph Moshinski were appointed to find out about barrels to carry water in.

The first regular meeting was held on January 3, 1938. A set of By-Laws was presented and accepted. The Westminster Village Volunteer Fire Department was now official. Ralph Roberts was elected Secretary-



Treasurer and John Farr, Fred Nelson and Emil Mattson were appointed to confer with the Village Trustees in regards to purchasing fire equipment. This committee along with the trustees bought the following equipment:

- 1 50 gallon pump and motor with  
connecting 10 ft. suction hose,  
300 ft, of 1½ in. fire hose  
and 2 nozzles
- 1 100 gallon supply pump and motor with  
20 ft. of suction hose,  
300 ft. of fire hose and  
2 nozzles
- 2 20 ft. ladders, 2 16 ft. ladders and hooks
- siren equipment

The next couple of meetings were mainly about equipment. A gift of \$20 from Mr. Mayo of Kurn Hatten was pledged for a siren. Fifty barrels were to be bought by the barrel committee. The two pumps arrived and were installed. Up to this point there were three captains who were the officers of the department. They were Arthur Bemis, Lynn Fullam and Harry Comstock. However on January 10, 1938 the following officers were elected:

- 1st Engineer John Farr
- 2nd Engineer Fred Nelson
- 3rd Engineer Emil Mattson

It was stated at this meeting that 2nd Engineer Fred Nelson had done a fine job on his equipment. Membership cards were printed by Kurn Hatten and issued to members. The matter of using the water tanks in several homes was discussed and members having such or knowing of such, were urged to cooperate in handling these tanks piped to increase the supply of water available. The connecting to be done by the company, but the material was to be paid for by the owner. Arthur Bemis stated that a large tank containing 225 gallons was in readiness at the orchard and could be used at a moments notice.

On March 29 of '38 the two new pumps were given a tryout at Bent's brook and proved very satisfactory. Also, on this date the first annual meeting was held with 21 members present. It was voted to elect officers for the coming year, but because they were unsure about the election of a chief, a committee of Emil Mattson, Ray Metcalf and Lynn Fullam were appointed to confer with Rollo Metcalf and consult Village records in this matter. Ralph Roberts was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Fred Nelson edged John Farr for 1st Engineer, John Farr got 2nd Engineer and 3rd Engineer went to Emil Mattson.

At the next meeting, in April, it was reported that there was nothing

definite in the records on how the chief should be elected. A motion was made and approved to elect a chief and two assistants. Arthur Bemis was elected chief with Lynn Fullam as 1st assistant and Clarence Torrey as 2nd Assistant.

In June of this year, A. H. Koltonski, Fire Chief of Rutland, came and spoke on fire fighting. Members from Chester and Saxtons River were also present. It was voted at a later meeting to pay A. Bemis \$2 to cover the expense of Mr. Koltonski's visit. During this time, the question of badges was brought up at a couple meetings, but was finally defeated by those who thought more important things were needed, such as smoke masks. However, A. Bemis reported that the use of a wet handkerchief or wet sponge was most effective in overcoming smoke in the lungs and fire extinguishing equipment was more important.

On July 28, 1938 they responded to their first "mutual aid" call to Chickering's barn fire in Walpole, but weren't needed. As Fall approached, the matter of housing the No. 1 pump for the winter was discussed and Eugene Metcalf, Fred Nelson and C. Torrey were appointed to find a heated place.

An alarm was sounded on Sunday, October 9, 1938 to try out the system. The members responded to the school house and small trucks were able to get water to the pumps in 14 minutes after the alarm sounded. The stream of water was high enough to wet the entire roof.

Ross's garage was home to the number 1 pump that first winter, heated by an oil stove. It was voted to have someone check the stove each day on a rotating basis. Ralph Jones made up a trailer capable of carrying two barrels of water and ladders. It proved very effective.

Up to this point, each man in the department was assigned a certain job in case of fire. Some were to man the hose, some traffic control, Fred Parker was at the hydrant at Kurn Hatten. There was a salvage crew and the Boy Scouts agreed to watch the goods taken from the building.

There were a couple of house fires during the summer of 1939. The Francis Parker home on Pine Banks burned in June. On July 7th an alarm called the department to the Phelps place on upper street. This fire was caused by an automobile which had just been placed in the barn. The flames spread so that it was impossible to save the barn, but the house was partially saved. The orchard and pump 2 were stationed at the building and no. 1 was placed at Potters brook. Walpole and Bellows Falls came but didn't make any connection to put water on the fire. Letters praising the department for their handling of the Phelps' fire were received from the Walpole Fire Department and the Brattleboro Trust Co. Brattleboro Trust Co. also sent a check to pay for Bellows Falls' service.

A ditch pump for filling barrels was purchased and kept with the barrels in the Hearse House. It was loaded on the first truck that came for barrels and kept ready with antifreeze so it only needed to be choked and cranked.

In November of 1939 it was voted to buy six red fire coats and hats. A chimney brush was bought for \$5, \$4 for the brush and \$1 for the rope. Any member could use the brush for 50¢. Eugene Metcalf stated that he was available if anyone wanted their chimney cleaned. A 32 ft. extension ladder was also purchased.

To raise money, the fire department used to put on dances with the Grange. They even had Bill Harris and his orchestra from Brattleboro. They also put on some shows.

Walpole Fire Department asked Westminster if they would respond to any fire off the main roads as their department couldn't get enough water to buildings on the back roads. A man would be stationed at Peck's drug store to direct them.

During the January meeting in 1941 John Farr was appointed to check with Harry Comstock on School Street about land across from the Grange Hall for a fire house. This land was not for sale and John was to continue his efforts in seeking a site. Fred Nelson and Chief Bemis were to help him check with the Fenn Brothers. It was voted that the Company recommend \$300 of Village funds be set aside as a building fund.

In the latter part of 1941 a temporary fire house was set up at Fenn's Farm. It was voted to have an article put in the town warning asking for space on the first floor of the town hall to keep fire equipment in. This space was not being used at this time.

During 1941-1942 seven members were in the service and man power was short. The age limit was dropped to 16 and letters were sent out to invite more men to join the department.

In 1943 the department appointed Fred Nelson to see if he could find land for a fire house in the Village. If he could get some prices he was to report back. The department moved that summer to the Dascomb garage. A list of trucks in the Village who could be called to carry barrels were Emery Howe, Fred Nelson, Paul Harlow, Charles Holton, Williams Brothers, Joe Parda, John Stone, Warren Potter, Powers Brothers, Chicker-ing and W. H. Bent. In June of 1943 the Village held a special meeting on the proposal of purchasing land for a fire house, but all that was decided was that more information was needed.

In 1945 at a meeting in Dascomb's garage it was voted to put two articles in the Village warrant. The first was to see if the village will vote to buy a building lot on Grout Ave. from N.O. Cote at a cost not to exceed \$250 and provide the means therefore. The second was to see if the Village will vote to provide funds to build a fire house. At the Village meeting on April 4, 1945 it was so voted.

In October of this year Chief Bemis and John Farr were appointed to check with Springfield, Vt. about a Dodge Fire Truck. It was decided to put in a bid for \$50 on it.

During '45 and '46 the fire house was built. The original cost of both the fire house and land was \$2290. There were many chimney fires during



this time, but from the Secretary's reports the biggest problem was seeding the new lawn and taking care of it.

On New Years Day in 1947 there was a big fire at the Westminster Inn. Needless to say the building was lost. The Chickering barn burned that same year. Also, during this time area fire chiefs were discussing the benefits of a mutual aid system.

In August the members voted to rebid on the Dodge truck in Springfield, raising the bid to \$205. This time the bid was accepted. We purchased two red lanterns to put on this truck. After the acquisition of this truck the department recommended the Village bill the Town a flat rate of \$10 for truck and equipment responding to fires outside of Village limits.

In 1950 Westminster West bought a pump for \$165, of which the State paid \$50. It would be available for forest fires if needed.

Chief Bemis reported that he had been to Walpole to see about them coming over here if called. They would come with a truck that had a 600 gallon tank on it and 5 or 6 men. The cost was \$25 for first hour and \$10 each hour thereafter for the truck and \$1 per hour per man. If called and not needed, no charge.

On November 21, 1951 the barn at N. O. Cote's burned and Walpole was called by the chief. Their bill was \$42.

In January of 1952 John Farr, Ralph Jones and Bill Wilder were appointed to check into getting a new truck. Kurn Hatten donated \$500 towards hose. This new truck arrived the following January at a cost of \$7000 and the old truck was sold to Rodney Reed for \$22. It was suggested at a fire meeting that a notice be put on the windshield of this new truck limiting speed to 35 mph. At this time the Village trustees got together with the Town selectmen and agreed on a charge of \$25 for the first hour and \$15 per hour after when responding outside Village limits.

In the Spring of '53 the men were drilling with the new truck at Bent's brook. Some of the older firemen were astounded by the water pressure produced. John Farr while participating in the drill was hit by a flying nozzle and broke his leg.

On May 11, 1953 Arthur Bemis resigned as fire chief as he was moving to Westminster West. Fay Jacobs was appointed to fill out the rest of the year as chief. He resigned in July as he was moving out of town. Bill Rolf succeeded him for the rest of the year.

The old hand pump which was used for parades was sold for \$300 and the money was turned over to the Village which in turn put it towards a portable pump. The firemen held food sales to raise money.

The first annual Roast Beef Supper was put on in October of 1954. A committee of George Cote, Fay Wright, Nial Jennison, Dick Williams and Jim Holton were in charge. A profit of \$275.75 was realized.

Fay Wright was elected to replace Bill Rolf as chief of the department in March of '55. The red phones were put into use about this time.

In September of 1956 it was voted to buy a Chevy tank truck from

E. Cray for \$500. Walt Jennison was in charge of selling CO<sup>2</sup> extinguishers this year and 92 were sold.

Charles Goldsmith was elected chief in March of 1957.

In June of 1958 the men voted to build an addition to the fire house. This addition was to be placed on the back side to make room for meetings and the storing of barrels, tables, dishes, etc. The estimate of cost at this meeting was \$841.40 to be paid for by the company with free water from George Cote. It was this year that the firemen decided to have a supper for them and their wives. The only difference from today's supper was that the main course was venison.

In December of 1959 Westminster took a truck and six men to Saxtons River for a fire at Thompson's chicken barn. We received \$35 for the truck and each man got \$5.35. In March of the following year the green 1956 Studebaker truck was bought. The engineer put a PTO pump on this which proved very satisfactory.

The fire department was accepted into the South Western mutual Aid in May of 1963 with instructions to mark equipment with red and yellow. In July five women were present at a meeting in regards to forming a fireman's auxiliary. The subject was tabled.

A motion was made in December of 1963 to buy a base station for \$600 to be paid for by the Dascomb Fund. In March of '64 it was voted to buy two radios for two of the trucks. During this meeting there was considerable discussion on some form of compensation from the Town. It was finally agreed to ask the Town for \$1000 at the next Town Meeting. The new addition at the school was allowed to hook up to the fire alarm.

We were "toned" from Keene sometime in March of 1965.

In September of '65 Fred Nelson reported we could claim ownership of a 5,000 gallon tanker which would be kept at his stand until spring. At this meeting it was voted to put an Article in the Village warning to pay the Fire Chief. It was about this time that many members bought fire monitors and these were put on the company's insurance. The Southern Twin State Mutual Aid was dissolved and a new Conn. River Valley Mutual Aid was formed.

In January of 1967 Chief Goldsmith discussed the advantage of purchasing a new tank truck and chassis. It was voted to buy a 1969 Dodge truck and the tank was to be built in Montpelier by Middlesex Co. The Studebaker was sold, to make room for the new truck, to Reading, Vt. for \$800. While responding to a trailer fire on Newcomb Brook Rd this year, Bill Wilder suffered a fatal heart attack.

In May of '72 two Scott Air packs were bought.

At a meeting in February of 1973 a committee of Ted Parker, Robert McKenny, George Cote and Albert Sumner were appointed to investigate the costs and possibilities of raising the fire house to accommodate trucks from Walpole and Putney.

In March of 1973 Albert Sumner was elected chief. A House Captain was added to the list of officers. Most of this summer was spent raising the roof on the fire house. The Fireman's Auxiliary was started in '73 and to this date have given the fire department helmets, coats, a portable pump and money totaling \$2859.50. They also prepare food for us at fires.

We had a bad fire at Dr. Buck's house in March of 1974. This year we bought a portable pump, a quick dump for the 5,000 gallon tanker. At the annual meeting of the Village in April they voted to buy a new Diesel fire truck. It arrived in February of '75 at a cost of \$35,000,

In March of this year we were given a forestry truck.

The annual town meeting in 1979 voted that the Town of Westminster authorize the Selectmen to form a town-wide Fire District under a prudential committee, for the purpose of fire protection and prevention, and (that it may be responsible for the street lights in the Village of Westminster), providing the enabling legislation is granted to form the fire district; and that the Charter of the Fire District shall provide for an annual meeting to be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Town and that presentation of the budget and requests for appropriations be made at that time.

The prudential committee is Jonathan Bump, Chairman, Barbara Hurley, George Cote. Present Fire Dept officers are: Chief, Albert Sumner Sr., Asst. Chief, Gregory Holton, 2nd Deputy, Robert Lober, Capt. Real Bazin, Capt. Robert Bazin, Secy/Treas, Rick Pagodin.

Approximately 35 Volunteers are enrolled in the Department. Volunteer receive no compensation for any fire service rendered. They meet twice a month for practice. Also, attend State and Mutual Aid Fire Schools.

The Westminster Volunteer Fire Dept. hold membership in the Southwestern New Hampshire Fire Mutual Aid System with Hdqtrs in Keene, N.H. (Chief Sumner is a member of its Board of Directors). Also, the Connecticut River Valley Fire Mutual Aid System with Hdqtrs in Springfield, Vt. Chief Sumner served as President of this group in 1979.

#### EQUIPMENT consists of:

Engine I—1975 Deisel Pumper 1000 GPM

Engine II—1969 Dodge 1500 Gallon Attack Tanker

Engine III—1953 Forestry Unit

Engine IV—1952 Studebaker 500 GPM

Engine V—1979 Deisel Pumper 1000 GPM

T6—5000 Gallon Trailer Tanker

#### 1981 Officers:

Chief - Albert Summer

Captain - Real Bazin

1st Assistant - Greg Holton

Captain - Howard Rice

2nd Assistant - Robert Lober

Sec/Treas - Rick Pagodin



## ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP: April 26, 1981

Luke Bazin	Real Bazin
Robert Bazin	Vince Buckholz
Gary Caggiano, Sr.	Gary Caggiano, Jr.
David Coburn	George Cote
Fred DeBell	Michael Faw- cett
Todd Franklin	Donald Fullam
JoAnn Golden	Patricia Haas
Lance Harlow	Greg Holton
Joel Holton	Brad Howarth
Daniel Law- rence	Robert Lober
Michael Lowe	Larry Martin
Eva Mondon	Ernest Norman
Richard Pago- din	Peter Parda
Howard Rice	Albert Sumner, Sr.
Albert Sumner, Jr.	Scott West

***THE WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ROLL OF ACTIVE MEMBERS (1937)***

<i>Member</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>			
Emil Mattson	44	labor	Donald Nimes	22	farmer
Ray Metcalf	51	store keeper	Raymond Metcalf	22	clerk
Clarence Torry	54	farmer	Winthrop Bent	45	farmer
George Tenney		pedler	Joseph Moshinski	33	farmer
Ralph Roberts	57	farmer	Kenneth Fullam		farmer
Fred Parker	43	farmer	John Rice	26	farmer
Harold Shattuck	33	farmer	Robert Rice	24	farmer
Fred Nelson	28	blacksmith	Herbert Partridge	20	labor
John Richmond		sexton	Joseph Parda		farmer
Lynn Fullom	49	farmer	Warren Potter		farmer
A. H. Bemis	48	labor	Lyle Aiken	24	labor
E. C. Austin	27	labor	William Parda	19	labor
George Richmond	74	mechanic	Eugene Metcalf	20	clerk
John Farr	39	mechanic	Fredrick Fenn		farmer
John Store	25	poultry man	A. Reed		mechanic
Hugh Bemis	24	truck driver	Harry Comstock		mechanic
			Ralph Jones		Truck driver

***ROLL OF HONORARY MEMBERS (1937)***

Louis Miller	Jerome Collins
George Geer	Ralph Potter
W. Mayo	Paul Harlow
Charles Arnold	Carol Williams

## V.S.A MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 1979

## Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect from passage.

Approved: March 27, 1979

## NO. M-2. AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE A FIRE DISTRICT FOR THE TOWN OF WESTMINSTER.

(H.99)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont: Sec.

## 1. WESTMINSTER FIRE DISTRICT

Notwithstanding section 2543 of Title 20, the selectmen of the town of Westminster may provide for the election of a prudential committee for that town's fire district, which may be separate from the board of selectmen, to have all authority and responsibility under chapter 171 of Title 20 except that after the voters have established a fire district budget, the town shall levy and collect taxes for the support of the fire district in the same manner as other town taxes. Upon approval of the fire district, the prudential committee shall have authority to borrow for the purposes of the district under the limitations of chapter 53 of Title 24.

## Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect from passage.

Approved: April 24, 1979



Last addition-1975 (L-R) Gregory Holton, George Cote, Theodore Parker Sr., Real Bazin, Robert Lober, Paul Cote, Al Summer Jr. Plans in progress for Hose Tower and Storage Shed in 1982

### *First Response*

Interest in the needs of Westminster has prompted the formation of an Emergency Aid organization called, "Westminster First Response Squad". Its founders are mostly young adults living in the community, who have had previous training in First Aid and Emergency skills. Some of the members had been attached to Volunteer Fire Depts or Ambulance Services in the neighboring towns or Rescue Inc. in Brattleboro. A survey showed there were enough qualified persons and others, willing to share of time, available (including neighboring Putney) for a stable organization, to answer emergency calls, when needed. New residents interested in joining the squad may contact a member.

Established in 1980, its annual meeting was held November 1, 1981. Officers elected included, Wanda (Norman) West, President; Tony Coven, Vice-president and training officer; Eva Monden, Secretary; Michael Lowe, Treasurer; Carl Noe, assistant secretary-treasurer; Terri (Rice) Lowe, Recording Secretary.

A review of the years activities showed that the squad has responded to 33 calls in Westminster. The members, who are volunteers, have also assisted in neighboring towns when needed.

The squad has participated in several training sessions and recently set up a first aid information booth at the Westminster West Church Fair. One member is instructing a basic first aid session for the town's 4H Clubs. The squad has also accepted invitations to speak to two local groups.

The first responder's fund drive has raised \$2,313 to date. Material items have also been donated and put to immediate use. The money has been used to buy oxygen equipment, blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, cold packs, identification plates and other items.

Additional money is being spent to update a resuscitator donated by the Westminster Fire Department and to meet the expense of a telephone line to the Windham County Sheriff's Department which alerts the squad to calls. The money also pays the squad's district ambulance dues.





### *Westminster Armory*

A large granite plaque at the main entrance bears the name given to this building; WESTMINSTER ARMORY, the State Seal and the names of the Board of Army Commissioners: Governor Thomas P. Salmon, Major General Reginald Cram and Brigadier General Sherman Gage, carved in the granite. The new Armory was so named to honor the historical aspects in the early settlement of Westminster and contributions made in the establishment of the State of Vermont.

The State purchased the land and built the new Armory in 1975. Dedication ceremonies were held in January, 1976. Governor Thomas P. Salmon gave the dedicatory address to an assembled audience of distinguished guests from throughout Vermont and New England.

Prior to 1975 there had been two Armories located in Windham County, one in Bellows Falls and the other in Brattleboro. The new Westminster Armory has replaced the two old buildings and is now the only Armory in Windham County. The site in the town of Westminster was chosen as it would provide a training area large enough to accommodate Tank Training for the National Guard. Detachment 2 Company B, 250th Supply and Transport Bn was moved here from Bellows Falls. Company B, 2nd Tank Battalion 172 Armor moved here from Brattleboro in March, 1976 and occupies the Armory as its base.

The Armory is also used by National Guard Units from Bennington, Bradford and Rutland. In the summer of 1981 a mini Tank Range was completed on the property, which, allows the Tank Companies to practice Tank Gunnery using a 22 caliber sub caliber device. National Guard Units drill on a monthly basis. Members are from New Hampshire as well as Vermont.

The National Guard stands ready to serve the State in any emergency and to serve the nation in the event any reenforcements are needed from the United States Army.

## AGRICULTURE

Dairy farms, especially the family farm type, with an average of 20-30 head of milking cows, are practically non-existent today. Federal and State regulations governing milk production have been a major factor in putting the small Vermont farmer out of business. Radical changes in the marketing of milk and the specific requirements imposed by State Milk Inspectors on the dairy producer necessitated heavy financial costs to update so-called "oumoded" equipment. The two farmer owned Milk Plant Co-operatives in nearby Bellows Falls and Brattleboro are also out of existence. The regulated new large stainless steel cooling storage systems and other modernized facilities either required new or renovated buildings for housing. In preference to heavy mortgages to stay in business many farmers sold the dairy herd and turned to other uses for the farmland. The number of active dairy farms in Westminster appear to be less than ten in 1981.

Three farms have withstood the changes and still remain in the same families that homesteaded the land in the 1700's. All are located in the West Parish. *Holden Hill Farm*, where the first windmill is believed to have been built to operate a gristmill for grinding corn, by Francis Holden or a member of his family. The road leading from the West Road to Holden Hill has been renamed "Windmill Hill Road". The original road continued by Ed Dodd's over the hill into Brookline. The present Windmill Hill road turns to the left at the intersection below Dodd's home and continues down the hill into the town of Putney. During the 1930's the road was not used in the winter. Later, the Town declared a two mile section (in the middle) as a "Trail". Today it is still a Trail, and is maintained by the new land owners who have built homes along the highway, at their own expense. Melinda Holden Doyle, daughter of Sharon and Grace (Fitzgerald) Holden has built a home on Holden Hill and resides there with her family. Melinda's grandfather, Jerome Holden, was a well known sheep raiser, with large flocks of sheep grazing the hillsides. Today, it is mostly a tree farm.

Richard Washburn Goodell is the present owner of the *Goodell Homestead Farm (1760's)*. His grandfather, Charles Goodell, set out an apple orchard, produced maple syrup and raised sheep. His father, Hugh Wallace Goodell, continued the same kind of farm operation. Richard produces maple syrup, has expanded the apple crop production, setting out new orchards, using the open fields, originally the hayfields for raising hay when there were sheep. A cider mill has been added, which now continues longer in operation, due to market demands for cider through the winter holidays. A heating system has been installed in the cider press area to enable using the facilities in cold weather. The Goodell's have two sons, Steven and John, who are now old enough to participate in the family farm operation.

The *Ranney Farm* still carries the family name, being settled in the 1770's. Arthur Ranney's nephew, Harold, son of George and Isabelle Ran-

ney, recently moved into the homestead (built 1848) and is continuing as the next generation to operate the registered Jersey dairy farm. The registered herd was established by his grandfather, Rollin H. Ranney. Selective breeding was continued by Uncle Arthur. Located in the South Valley section of West Parish, on a hardsurfaced highway, the large milk cooling storage area is readily accessible to the large 18 wheeler tank trucks, which haul the milk from the farm to the metropolitan milk plants in Massachusetts. The Ranney's concentrate on dairy farming, averaging around 100 milking cows. Cows are stabled in a new modern cow barn, built in the last decade, are milked twice daily, using milking machines with lines piped directly to the milk storage cooling tank, regulated by temperature controls.

Beef cattle have consistently been replacing the dairy cow on many farms since the 1940's. Herefords appear to be the desired breed.

The Boardman Bump family purchased the farm formerly owned by J. Hunt Clark, breeder of grade Ayshire cattle in the 1880's. It had changed ownership many times since the 1920's and the land had become depleted in crop production. The Bumps have brought the land back into production and established a Polled Hereford farm, specializing in developing registered breeding stock. The farm has been incorporated as the "East Run Farm", the goal is to develop a herd of cattle that will be consistent, efficient producers on a feeding program based on grass, the feed which is the most practical for the Northeast. The starter cows were from the Morlunda Farms herd in West Virginia, noted for its production of Polled Herefords that milk and do especially well on grass. They also purchased as starters a number of cows from other top bloodlines. Boardman and sons, Jonathan and Daniel are the principal operators. Jonathan is also a practicing attorney and member of a law firm in Brattleboro. Expanding the East Run Farm operations the Bumps have purchased the Gorham Farm, another "Centenarian" family farm, still in operation, but no longer owned by the Gorhams. This farm was first purchased by Ephrain Wilcox in the 1700's, then sold to daughter Jane's husband, David Crowell Gorham and was carried on by Henry Gorham until his death in 1943, almost 84 years of age. The next owner sold to Frank and Flora Patch, Hartland, Vt. The Patchs had a large dairy (Holsteins) and added a poultry and egg business. Mr. Patch succumbed to a heart attack after ten years on the farm.

East Run Farms collaborated with Turner Homestead Farm, Dover, Vt. in hosting an Invitational Polled Hereford Sale on June 9, 1979, with sale headquarters at the uniquely largesized Gorham barn (1880 era) now called the "Patch Unit" of East Run Farm. Three other Vermont breeders joined the Bumps and Turner in offering at the sale an opportunity to invest in some of the most flourishing and productive bloodlines of Polled Herefords from some of the top animals, not only from this country, but also, from Canada and Australia. Col. Eddie C. Sims, Lawton, Oklahoma, was the auctioneer. Special guests included: Dr. Frank P. Perrone, Director,



American Polled Hereford Assn.; Edwin Gast, President, Vermont Beef Producers Assn.; David Key, County Agricultural Agent, Vermont Extension Service; Charles Smith, President, New England Hereford Assn.

Riding horses are becoming popular again with riding trails being developed in wooded land and old abandoned roads. Carriages and sleighs are in demand by persons desiring leisurely drives on the backroads. Open fields are ploughed especially for sleigh riding. Maynard Aiken and Paul McIntyre specialize in "hay rides" hitching a pair of work horses up to the old farm hay wagon, using bales of hay for seating the riders. This has become a popular pastime for young people and school children. Oldsters enjoy rides too, the smell of hay and horses reminds them of the days when they helped in the hayfield "down on the farm".

Lyle and Margaret Bemis own and operate a registered Morgan Horse farm. "Heigh-Lo Farm" is located in the West Parish on the old road to Athens. Lyle Bemis is the third generation to maintain this farm, his Grandmother Taylor lived here after moving to Vermont from the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Taylor family originally migrated west from Vermont. The Bemis' participate in many of the registered Morgan Horse shows in New England, and the Northeast.

Westminster West has a 4H Horse Club, led by Beverly Major. Each year this group sponsors a horse show on the grounds at the Westminster Institute with participants not only from Windham County, but other counties as well.

Jill Noss, local horsewoman, gives private lessons in riding instruction and horsemanship. She operates a trail riding course in the summer and fall months. Jill has raised and trained her own horse to be a "jumper". She learned "jumping skills" when a student at a private secondary school, participating in riding and horsemanship classes. Later, she was certified to ride "jumpers" at Madison Square Garden Horse Shows. Joyce Searles also specializes in riding horses, having purchased the former Williams Bros. Farm at Westminster Station.

The "W.S. Fenn Company" Farm was sold after the death of the Fenn Bros. For several years the Chickering Family, cattle dealers, conducted a "Cattle Commission Sales Barn" with auctions held on a weekly basis. It was eventually purchased by Hackett of Newport, Vt. and the name changed to "Westminster Farms". Mr. Hackett expanded the dairy operation, not only improving the buildings but added an ice cream making business. After Mr. Hackett died the farming operation declined. The farm has recently been purchased by Clayton Goodell of Putney (great grandson of Charles Goodell, early settler in West Parish). Clayton, assisted by his brother, Robert are operating a dairy (Holstein cows). In the summer of 1981, the ice cream operation was reactivated, selling directly to the consumer with a "drive in" window on the front of the main building.

Joel Holton and Paul Harlow are third generation farmers living in the East Parish. Joel and family reside in the original Holton homestead

on Rte 5 at Westminster Center. He raises and markets mostly, potatoes, sweet corn and squash as crop specialties and sells on a wholesale basis as did his grandfather and father. Paul Harlow, named after his grandfather, specializes in seasonal fresh vegetables, selling directly to the consumer from his roadside stand, north of Westminster Station on Rte 5. He is assisted by members of the family, keeping it a family farm operation. His father, Hollis and grandfather Paul had dairy cows but have now been replaced with herefords. HARLOW FARM is widely known for its fresh asparagus crop in the spring.

ALLEN BROS. maintains a year round fruit and vegetable market, also on Rte 5, offering apples, raised at the Allen Orchards in Saxton's River, as well as vegetables raised on the Allen property during the growing season. GREEN MOUNTAIN PRODUCE, one of the first vegetable stands at Westminster Station, Rte 5, started by Fred Nelson is still in operation. It was sold to the Skrocki Bros. when Mr. Nelson retired.

Interest in organic grown food has prompted some market garden growers to venture into this phase of vegetable raising. Howard Prussack came from Brooklyn, New York in the summer of 1971 to work on a "Nature Farm" in Westminster West. The project "folded" but Howard stayed as he liked it here. He rented land and started raising organic grown vegetables on his own. He built a small stand on the roadside, sold to natural food stores and took his fresh vegetables to sell at the Newfane Flea Market on Sundays. His venture paid off. The next season he became involved in weekly Farmers Market in Brattleboro. He has now built his own Farm Market Stand on Putney Rd. in Brattleboro. Two years ago he purchased the farm adjacent to Arthur Ranney's, has constructed a large greenhouse to grow organic garden produce on a year round basis to retain his regular customers and sell to stores in the surrounding towns.

Toby Young Price, an herb enthusiast, has established the "Westminster West Herbary", at her home on the Old Athens Road. The previous owner of the property, John McIntyre, had built a greenhouse, propagated flowering plants and seedlings for the spring market, taking orders and selling at the greenhouse. Utilizing the existing facilities, Toby is concentrating on herbs, offering an assortment of over 50 different varieties of herbs in addition to old fashioned perennials.

The KURKUL FAMILY FARM, off Morse Brook Road, is another of the few remaining dairy operations. It is a second generation farm, now being assisted by the third generation of Kurkuls living here.

John L. Williams, a native of Westminster, living in the town of Vernon, maintains a 300 acre farming operation in the East Parish.

Carleton E. Greenwood owns the former Winthrop Bent farm, maintaining a dairy operation with a herd of Holstein cattle.





*Community Feed Stores Inc.*

Location—adjacent to the railroad tracks at Westminster Station.

Architectural structure—Large 3½ story central block, has symmetrical 1½ story side wings. Sash 6/6.

The exact year as to when the Grist Mill was built has not been determined. Searching the deeds back to 1893, when property was owned by A. E. Brighan & Herbert W. Leach, no mention is made of a building on the property. Frederick M. Gilbert was the owner in 1896 and it was sold by his wife, Alice C. Gilbert to Oliver & Ida Butterfield in 1902. The deed given by the Butterfields to Joseph Wright in 1907 includes a "Grist Mill" as part of the property. Therefore, it can be assumed that the construction of the building was between 1902 and 1907. Joseph Wright, a joiner & carpenter by trade, might well have been the builder. He transferred the deed to his son, Charles, in 1917. This transfer was not recorded until 1929, when Charles Wright sold the Gristmill to L. E. Whitaker Stores.

Joseph Wright, born in 1847, in Callington, Cornwall, England, came with his bride, (Marie Jasper) to Rutland, Vermont, in 1870. He immediately went to work for the Rutland Railroad Company. Ten years later, still employed by the Railroad Company, they moved to Bellows Falls. He built the house at 96 Atkinson Street for his family. A decision was made to move out of the Village as his four sons were approaching their "teens". In 1885, the Wrights purchased a 165 acre farm in Saxton's River, near the Rockingham-Westminster town line, on the road leading to Westminster West. Mrs. Wright, accompanied by son Fred, bought the farm at auction for \$2,000. Mrs. Wright and the boys handled most of the farm operation





Family Ownership—Ervin (Skip) Clough and son Paul



Grainery Bins and Storage area



(15 children in all, 10 boys—5 girls). Mr. Wright built a large clapboarded addition on the original brick house to accomodate the growing family.

In 1907, when Joseph Wright, began operating the Gristmill, at Westminster, he drove his horse and carriage (sleigh in winter), daily from his farm, through the Village of Saxton's River, over what is now called, "Back Road" Westminster, and down Sand Hill Road to Westminster Station. Ruth M. Buxton, a grand daughter, recalls being told, that it would be late at night when the faithful horse would arrive home safely, with grandfather, sound asleep in the carriage, after a long days work.

Records show that the Grist Mill was incorporated on June 11, 1930 and named the "Community Feed Stores". Charles Wright repurchased the Business in 1939. (He also, owned and operated a feed grain store in Bellows Falls, near the Railroad Station.) His brother-in-law, George Buxton, was the book keeper, thus, again becoming a family operating business.

Ervin (Skip) Clough was a longtime employee. In 1945, Mr. Wright sold him a ½ interest in the Grist mill. Mr. Clough purchased the remaining ½ interest in 1953 and became the sole owner. Mr. Clough reorganized the Corporation in February, 1974. Son Paul began working at the Granary in 1974 as an employee. Ervin Clough retired in 1981. Paul has purchased the controlling interest and has been elected President-Treasurer and Atty. George Nostrand, Clerk.

Grain has not been ground at the Mill since local farmers stopped raising their own grains. Bulk grain is delivered by Tractor Trailers. Bag feeds are shipped by rail to the Granary from Richford, Vt.

Community Feed Store serves all of Windham County and parts of Windsor and Bennington Counties, delivering to its customers 100 Tons a week in bulk feed and 70 Tons a month of bag feeds. It continues to be the only locally family owned Granary, in Westminster, operating since it was established at the turn of the century.



St. Johnsbury Trucking Co. Inc. located on Route 5 adjacent to an I91 Highway exit.

*MAJOR INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES*

COMPANY	PRODUCT
Con-O-Lite of Vermont Inc.	Burial Vaults
Northeastern Culvert Corp.	Metal culverts, sectional plate, pipes & arches
DGM Machines Shop Inc.	
Fall Mountain Motors Inc.	Ford and Toyota Car Dealers
Schwan's Sales Enterprises, Inc.	Frozen Foods
Roger Farnsworth Construction Inc.	Excavating-Hauling-Land Clearing
Hodgkins & Sons Inc.	Contractors-Excavating
The Woodstone Company	Architectural and Cabinet Woodworking
Beebe Plumbing Shop	General plumbing and well- drilling
Maplecraft Manufacturing Co.	Banjo, tambourine and drum hoops, wall scraper handle
S.J.T. Real Estate Holding Co. Inc.	Truck Terminal
Holmes Transportation Co. Inc.	Truck Terminal
(Vermont Terminal Inc.)	Truck Terminal
James Truck Inc.	Trucking Terminal
Westminster Heights Boarding Kennel	For dogs on daily and weekly basis
Westminster Restaurant and Motor Inn	
The Big Red Barn	Retail Gift Shop
North American Inflatables Inc.	Boats
Community Feed Store Inc.	
Bates Wood Stoves (Iron)	Specializes in parts for old iron stoves
Cram	Antique and Second Hand Fur- niture
Golden Eagle Antiques	Antique and Second Hand Fur- niture
<i>Real Estate</i>	
Edith Nauceder	
Toby Young	Major Real Estate
Donald Fullam	Arms Real Estate
<i>Growers and Producers</i>	
High Meadow Farm	Retail Market Gardener
Green Mountain Produce	Retail Market Gardeners
Allen Bros. Inc.	Retail Market Gardeners
Harlow Bros.	
(Paul Harlow Farm)	Retail Market Gardeners
Joel Holton	Potatoes & Corn (Wholesaler)



East Run Farms	Hereford breeding cattle (The Bump Family)
Meadowhill Farms	Hereford breeding cattle (John Williams)
Heigh-Lo Morgan Horse Farm	Registered Morgan Horses (Lyle & Margaret Bemis)
The Herbarry	Herbs and Old Fashioned Perennials (Toby Young-Price)
Goodell's Cider Press & Apples	(Richard/Claire Goodell)
Goodell's Westminster Farm Ice Cream	Dairy Farm (Clayton Goodell)

*Maple Syrup Producers*

Richard W. Goodell	William Kurkul
Kenneth R. Beebe	East Run Farms
Sidelands Trust	Martin Collins
(Campbell & Crocker)	Donald Newcomb

*Services*

Hair Fashions	Caster Small Engine Repair Service
LeFevre Ambulance	L & L Repair Service
Westminster Aqueduct Society	Touissant Saab Repair
Sno-Valley Services	European Travel Camp
Consumer Controlled Community	Gay's Fuel Service
Child Care, Inc.	"Loafer's Glory" Bakery

*Retail Businesses*

Shattuck's Market  
 Westminster Station Market  
 Korner Kitchen  
 Falls Ceramics  
 Vermont Wreaths  
 Westminster West General Store

*Professional Services*

Dr. Ralph N. Buck, D.D.S.  
 Dr. Dennis Pellegrino, D.D.S.  
 Dr. Ben Dow, D.V.M.

*Craft Shops and Studios**Woodworking*

Russ Zimmerman—specializes in restoration, woodworker  
 Dooley Woodworks—custom and creative wood items by Larry Dooley  
 Nick Kiel—wood joiner & cabinet maker  
 Daniel Noss—woodworker and cabinet maker  
 Deborah Bump—designs wooden objects & wood carver

*Ceramics & Pottery*

Virginia Wyoming  
Mary Ann McArdle  
Carol Sevick  
Carl Lindgren

*Photographers*

Michael Fawcett  
Jill Noss  
Dorothea Kehaya  
Leslie Ward

*Weavers*

Judy Hodson  
Elizabeth Mills

*Silversmiths*

Jeanne Wulsin  
Thomas V. Burns

*Stained Glass*

Richard Neumann

*Artists*

Penelope Arms  
Diane Bailey  
John E. Castelli  
Virginia Clark  
Mildred Dee  
Barbara Garber  
Claire Goodell  
Holly Lawrence  
Grace McKernan  
Lorraine Miller  
Elizabeth M. Simonds  
Gilbert Taylor  
Phyllis Yamplosky

*Locksmith*

Robert D. Hartwell Sr.

*Quilter*

Louise A. Lettieri

References: Town Grand List, ownership listings may vary. Any omissions or errors are not intentional.

*ZONING IN WESTMINSTER*

General provisions of the establishment for a Town Zoning Ordinance was in accordance with and subject to the limitations of the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 VSA Chapter 91. It establishes zones, zone regulations, and supplementary regulations.

The purpose of the Westminster Zoning Ordinance is to provide for the planned use and development of all lands within the town in a manner which will promote the public health and welfare of the Townspeople; which will conserve the soil, the water, the beauty, and the other natural resources of the Town; and which will protect the historic features of the Town: all in accordance with Sections 4302 of the Act (VSA).

Following the procedures according to the Statutes and using the Australian ballot, the zoning ordinance was adopted at the annual town meeting March 3, 1970.

In accordance with Section 4405 of the Act (VSA) the entire town is divided into the following zones: 1. Rural One Acre Zone (zone RUR-1). 2. Village Zone (zone VIL) Note: King's Highway District (zone VIL-KH) is a portion of the Village Zone. 3. Commerical Zone (zone COM). 4. Industrial Zone (zone IND).

The exact locations are determined by a Zone Boundary Map (Section 2.2 of the town zoning ordinance) and is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

Shown on the map are the boundaries of the following village Zones: Westminster Center (incorporated 1913), King's Highway District; North Westminster Village (incorporated 1925); Westminster West Village—from center of road from Saxtons River to Putney, where it crosses East Putney Brook, just north of the church, for one-half mile on all public roads, 500 feet from the center of all public roads to each side.

Effective since the adoption of the Ordinance (March 3, 1970) no land development shall be commenced and no building or structure shall be erected, moved, or extended without a Zoning Permit therefor issued by the Administrative Office in accordance with Section 4443 of the Act (VSA).

Subdivision regulations were adopted April 19, 1972. These regulations do not apply to developments that subdivide a parcel of land into less than five lots, or to lots meant for members of the



sub-divider's immediate family, or to lots larger than ten acres, as provided in the text of the regulations.

The Selectmen have established certain road specifications for consideration of acceptance of any new road to be added to the Town Highway system within the Township. These regulations were first passed by the Board of Selectmen December 3, 1969, updated and amended November 11, 1975.

Westminster is further governed by the "State Environmental Law Jurisdiction" (Act 250). State permits are required for the creation of one or more lots less than 10 acres in size, for most commercial buildings, and for dwellings with two or more units. The state has regional offices throughout the state to provide the information. Upon contact an official, from the local regional office, will complete a project review as a written record of the state's determination of jurisdiction covering the land on which the project is proposed. The regional office for this area is located in North Springfield, Vermont.

When new situations arise which are not covered in the zoning regulations as previously adopted or with changing times a particular ordinance is outdated it necessitates going through standard revision procedures for acceptance. Westminster's Ordinances have been revised six times since the original adoption in 1970. The last review was March 6, 1979.

A complete set of the Ordinances and Regulations may be obtained upon request at the Town Clerk's office.

There is also a topographical map designating Flood Hazard Areas within the town. These sections are usually restricted to Agricultural use, also restricting construction of buildings. Last revision of this map was June 1977 following the completion of land capability and land use planning studies.

*Westminster Planning and Development Commission*  
*Town of Westminster, Vermont*

*A Plan for the King's Highway District*  
A Proposed Design Control District Within the Westminster  
Village Zone

The Westminster Planning and Development Commission, having consulted with the Westminster Village Board of Trustees, herewith proposes that the King's Highway District, as defined below, be designated as a Design Control District within the Westminster Village Zone. The King's Highway District contains structures of unique historical, patriotic, architectural, and cultural merit, warranting its conservation and controlled development.

The King's Highway, a broad and beautiful avenue laid out in 1737 during the reign of King George II, figures importantly in the early history of the Town, the State, and the Republic. In the words of Hamilton Child (1884): "About this street, now so quiet and restful, are clustered some of the most rare and striking legends of Vermont's historic lore. Here the first newspaper in the State was published, and it was here that, January 16, 1777, was held the convention that declared the New Hampshire grants a 'free and independent State'." A monument marks the site of the old Court House which on March 13, 1775 witnessed the Westminster Massacre during which the first blood of the Revolution was shed.

*Authority:* Sections 4405(a)(3)(F) and 4407(6) of the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 V.S.A. Chapter 91; and Sections 3.3 and 5.3 of the Westminster Town Zoning Ordinance.

*Size and location:* An approximately rectangular area of about 115 acres that straddles the King's Highway (U.S. 5) and is 5,000 feet long (N-S) and 1,000 feet wide (E-W). The southern boundary coincides with the southern boundary of Westminster Village (crossing U.S. 5 near the base of Clapp's Hill and near Evans' Brook). The northern boundary crosses U.S. 5 north of the southern boundary (near the base of Court House Hill). The eastern and western boundaries parallel U.S. 5, each 500 feet from the highway center line.

*Planning and design problems:* to insure against intrusion by developments not in keeping with the rich colonial heritage described above and still largely in existence today.

*Recommended planning and design criteria:* to maintain the present colonial atmosphere and the present spaciousness of front and side yards. No structure should be erected, reconstructed, restored, moved, the exterior substantially altered, demolished, or changed in use or type of occupancy without design review by the Westminster Village Board of

Trustees and design approval by the Westminster Planning and Development Commission. Bases of consideration should include whether the proposed development is in harmony with the other properties in the District with respect to exterior design, exterior materials, and landscaping.

January 19, 1970

//Signed// G. Preston James  
Chairman, Westminster Planning  
and Development Commission

*Sub-Divisions recorded under Zoning regulations (1981)*

Howe Farm (Wabena)	Anthony Cersosimo
Hartley Hill Farm	Anthony Cersosimo
Kimball Hill	Green Mountain Acres, Inc.
Kissell Hill	Tony F. Kissell
Parker Farm	Ted Parker, Kurn Hattin Road
Flagship Properties, etal	Tekosky, Kurn Hattin Road
	Scioscio, Wellington Hill Road/
	Morse Brook Road
	Simard, Morse Brook Road
	Rayt, Morse Brook Road
Wilsel Corporation	Rathbun, Wellington Hill Road,
	Kurn Hattin Road, Parker Road
G. Preston James	Morse Brook Road-Wellington Hill
	Road
Watkins Estate & Harvey Fry	Westminster Housing Authority,
	Rte 5 & I-91 Across Road
Dorothy & Francis Wilkinson	Trailer Park, S.A. #2
Sam Bell	Shady Pines Trailer Park, S.A. #5
Edward Agoes	Bemis Hill Road
William Muzzey	S.A. #5
Birch View Heights	Francis Allen
Richard Morse	S.A. #5
Ecccommunity, Inc.	S.A. #5



# *Town Organization*

*TOWN OFFICERS—1981**Moderator*

Randolph T. Major, Jr.

*Town Clerk*

Betty J. Holton, 1982

*Town Treasurer*

Ella G. LeFevre, 1982

*Selectmen*Toby Young-Price,  
1983J. Barton (Tony)  
Elliott, Jr., 1982Barbara F. Hurley,  
1984*Listers*

Norman E. Wright, 1983

Ruth S. Pearce, 1982

William A. Noyes, 1984

*Auditors*

Deborah Bump, 1983

Alice C. Caggiano, 1982

Laura Phillips, 1984

*First Constable*

Dennis A. Lawrence

*Second Constable*

Gary R. Caggiano, Sr.

*Town Grand Jurors*

William B. Price

Malcolm L. Streeter

*Town Agent*

William B. Price

*Collector of Delinquent Taxes*

Town Manager,

William J. McCauley III

*Receiver of Taxes*

Town Treasurer, Ella G. LeFevre

*School Directors*William E. O'Connor,  
1983

Sven Huseby, 1982

Donna N. Rice, 1984

*Directors for Union High School District #27*

Chris A. Cota, 1983

Barbara B. Kurkul,  
1982

David L. Deen, 1984

*Justices of the Peace*

Terms expire 1982

Real J. Basin, Margaret F. Bemis, Carleton Greenwood, William T. Kurkul,  
Dennis A. Lawrence, Robert T. Lober, Terri R. Lowe, Beverly B. Major,  
Ernest R. Norman, William B. Price

*Trustees of Campbell Fund*

Arthur N. Berry, 1983

Edward T.

Ella G. LeFevre, 1984

McKenna, 1982

*Commissioners of Campbell Fund*

Barbara B. Kurkul

Arlene M. Reed

Phyllis B. Norman

*Trustees of Public Funds*

Arthur N. Berry, 1983

Edward T.

Ella G. LeFevre, 1984

McKenna, 1982

*Representatives to General Assembly*

Norman E. Wright, Westminster

Toby Young-Price, Westminster

*Board of Civil Authority*

Consists of Justices of Peace, Selectmen and Town Clerk

We, the Selectmen of the Town of Westminster, in the County of Windham and the undersigned, hereby certify that the following officers were appointed by us, on the 10th day of March, 1981, to serve for the ensuing year:

Chairman of the Board of Selectmen: Barbara F. Hurley  
 Clerk for the Board of Selectmen: Cathy L. Randazzo  
 Assistant Clerk-Board of Selectmen: Toby Young Price  
 FENCE VIEWERS: 1. Walter J. Kurkul 2. Warren Muzzey 3. Fred Harlow  
 POUND KEEPERS: 1. Patricia Haas 2. Warren Muzzey 3. Vincent Buckholz Sr.  
 INSPECTORS OF WOOD & LUMBER: 1. Francis Allen 2. Ralph Lawrence 3. Martin Collins  
 WEIGHER OF COAL: Walter Allbee  
 TREE WARDEN: Robert Farnsworth Sr.  
 INSPECTOR OF LEATHER: Ernest R. Norman  
 CHAIRMAN OF CIVIL DEFENSE: Lawrence G. Martin  
 TOWN SERVICE OFFICER: Barbara Greenwood  
 TOWN ENVIRONMENTALIST: Judith Gellert  
 ROAD COMMISSIONER: William J. McCauley, III  
 ROAD FOREMAN: Robert Farnsworth Sr.  
 REPRESENTATIVE TO COUNCIL ON AGING: Ruth Lowe Fellows  
 FIRE WARDENS: 1. ARthur Bensenhaver 2. Henry Thompson 3. Gregory E. Holton  
 TOWN ENERGY COORDINATOR: James McKernan  
 SIGN CONTROL OFFICER: William J. McCauley, III  
 CEMETERY COMMISSIONER: Board of Selectmen ASST. Charles Goldsmith Jr. & Robert Farnsworth Sr.  
 CEMETERY SEXTONS: 1. Hollis Rhoades (New Cemetery-Old Cemetery) 2. Fred Harlow (Westminster West Cemetery)  
 OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR NOTICES: Brattleboro Reformer  
 W.R.P. & D.C. COMMISSIONERS: 1. David P. Riley 2. Gregory Bolosky  
 RECREATION BOARD: 1. Richard Miller 2. Kenneth D. Profitt 3. Barbara Seymour 4. James McKernan 5. Robert Lober

Term expiration date designates appointment and approval by Board of Selectmen.

HEALTH OFFICER: Elizabeth B. Sargent L.P.N.  
 ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: Clerk, Carol A. Fullam, Robert Forrest - 1982, Albert Hunker - 1983, Eugene Metcalf - 1982, Malcolm Streeter - 1984, Arthur Bensenhaver - 1982, Jonathan Bump 1983, Barbara F. Hurley, Chairman, Board of Selectmen  
 WESTMINSTER PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION: Clerk, Carol Bazin, William B. Price - 1982, Francis Mills - 1983, John F.H. Cook - 1985, Robert Forrest - 1982, Gary Caggiano - 1983, Robert Lober - 1985, Malcolm L. Streeter - 1982, Mark Kennedy - 1984



People involvement appears to be the "key" to the growth of Towns as State and Federal Funds have become more prevalent in the last decade. National Funding for programs tends to increase higher administration costs for planning as well as dictating more uniformity in programs at the State and local levels. Citizens have reason to be concerned as to the extent many of the programs conceived in our Nations Capital, should be held to the same rules and regulations for every State. States vary geographically so do the natural resources and its people. Whether adhering to the "same rules" for all is justifiable on long range programs for real benefits or broader concepts are more beneficial for a towns growth remain to be the judgement of the forth coming generations.

### *Town Government*

Improved communication and modern transportation has its effect on a town's form of government. The rotation of the annual Town Meeting (West Parish, East Parish, No. Westminster) each year gave way to the annual meeting being held over in the East Parish Town Hall. Population increases necessitated a larger meeting place if the town was to continue the open Town Meeting for all to participate. The answer was moving to the new Union High School Auditorium when the building was completed in 1971. The Australian method of voting was adopted for officers and certain Articles as designated by Vermont Statutes, or deemed appropriate by the Board of Selectmen/School Board. Day meetings were changed to evening to accomodate voters, who worked out of town during the day.

The Town Meeting Warrant has steadily increased in the number of articles listed to transact the necessary business of the Town. Three separate districts are now required (Town, School, Fire) to operate and carry out the individual legal functions properly at a meeting. The first Tuesday in March is the leal Town Meeting date in Vermont. It is impossible with the length of the present day agenda to comple all the Articles in the Warrant. Westminster haold its first session on Monday evening, recessing to Tuesday evening for completion of business. The meeting is officially called to order at the Town Hall where the Australian Ballot type of voting begins at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning continuing until 7:00 p.m. Contests for office and "heated issues" at the local level will increase the number of voters at the polls as well as the meetings in the evening.

The need for well organized plans for the future developemnt and growth of the town as a whole became an apparent need soon after the end of World War II. The first step in this direction was the adoption in 1953, at the annual Town Meeting, of a "Development Committee." The committee was comprised of two representatives from each section of town and the Board of Selectmen. This group began laying the groundwork for long range town plans. Other towns in the county began looking ahead

also, and the Windham Regional Planning and development Commission was formed. In 1967 Westminster voted to join this group to expand the planning to a county wide basic. The Westminster Development Commission was merged into the new "Town Development and Planning Commission" in 1968. G. Preston James was elected Chairman.

Zoning Ordinances were adopted in 1970. Six revisions have been made, the last in 1979. A formalized Town Plan was prepared in 1980, reviewed by the Boards of Selectmen/School and Town Highway Commission.

Federal Funding and Grants necessitated increased time consuming meetings for the Selectmen plus a steady increase in town involved affairs. The Town voted to increase the membership from three to five, to cope with the situation the time had now arrived for further administrative changes. The Town Manager Plan was adopted and so voted by an overwhelming majority at the March Town Meeting in 1980. William J. McCauley III was hired in June and began his duties August 4, 1980 as Westminster's first Town Manager. A graduate of University of Maine 1979, majoring in Public Management he came here from Canaan, N.H. where he had served as Town Administrator. The Board of Selectmen was reduced to its original number of three.

The Historical Society was moved to the second floor of the Town Hall and the first floor renovated to accommodate office space for the Town Manager and Secretary. The Town Clerk's office was enlarged to provide space for the lists and Town Treasurer. The front section of the first floor in the Hall was converted into a small meeting area. Booths are placed here for voting purposes during all elections.

It is anticipated that the Town Clerk's vault will have to be increased in size in the near future to hold the ever increasing Town documents.

Westminster will always move ahead in keeping with the changing times.



*Mary W. F. Fullam—Town Clerk Emeritus*

Born, June 1, 1888, on her grandfather Smith's farm in Hinsdale, N.H. (now the Hinsdale Race Track), she was the daughter of Annie (Smith) and William A. Foster of Corning, N.Y. Mr. Foster was a well known railroad man. The family lived in Corning until her fathers death, then moved to Greenfield, Mass. Mrs. Foster and daughter moved to Westminster in 1910, when Mrs. Foster purchased the former property of Austin & Harriet Goodridge. Mary graduated from Mount Holyoke College, cum laude.

Mary Wright Foster married Lynn W. Fullam, a native of Westminster, March 29, 1911. Together, they operated the home farm, then called "Lawn Meadow Farm", until Mr. Fullams death. Mary Fullam's House was one of the early Tourist Guest Homes, in Westminster, and a delight to summer visitors. Serving the meals home style, with fresh vegetables from the farm, anywhere from 15 to 20 persons would be found having dinner on a daily basis, in the spacious dining room. Also, she fed all the "hired help". The Fullams had two sons, Kenneth and Lynn Jr., a daughter, Janice. The children all shared in the responsibilities of the family operations, as they grew older.

When Lynn Fullam was elected Town Clerk in 1937, he appointed Mary, assistant Town Clerk. She succeeded him and was elected Town Clerk in 1943.

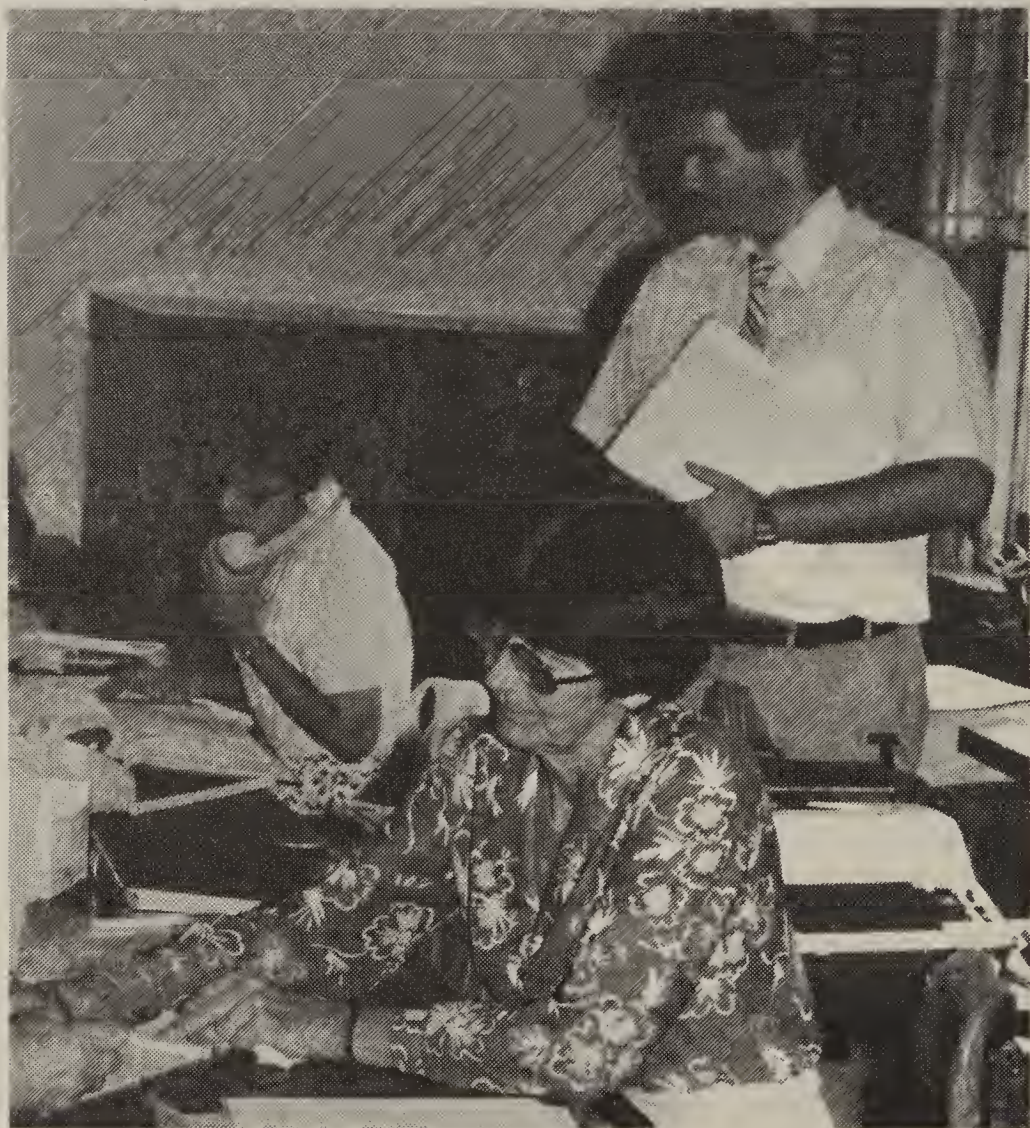
In 1969, at the age of 80, Mrs. Fullam retired as Town Clerk and Betty J. Holton, her assistant since 1952, was elected Town Clerk. At every annual Town Meeting, Mrs. Fullam has shared the Town Clerks desk, as our Town Clerk Emeritus, wearing a beautiful corsage (a gift from Betty). The last Town Meeting she attended, the residents of Westminster pre-



sented her with a "good sized check", a gift of honor, love and respect to a distinguished citizen of Westminster, who served for over 30 years in keeping the town records up to date and developing a concise filing system in the Towns vault, built in 1954, in the Town Clerks office, during her tenure. Thinking back and reminiscing of her years as Town Clerk, Mary says, "I loved every bit of it".

A member of the Abigail Stearns Chapter of the D.A.R., Boyden Grange, (50 year member), Bellows Falls Woman's Club, and in later years the Senior Citizens Club of Westminster, indicates her interest in many aspects of community life. Also, she was well known as an ardent bridge player and never missed (if possible), a meeting of the local Bridge Club.

She was the local correspondent for the Brattleboro Daily Reformer, Rutland Herald, and Bellows Falls Times, later the Bellows Falls News Review, reporting all the town's activities and news items until she moved to Charlestown, N.H., where she now lives with her son, Lynn Fullam Jr. and family.



Town Officers in the newly renovated Town Office section of the Town Hall. (1981)  
L-R Ella LeFevre, Trea., Betty J. Holton, Clerk, William J. McCauley III, Town Mgr.



## SCENIC ROADS

The Vermont Scenic Preservation Council, organized a program throughout Vermont for the preservation of certain roads for scenic beauty, historic sites, landmarks, its stonewalls, unique types of fences and other factors along the roadsides which lend to roads characteristic to the Vermont setting. Financially aided by a grant under the Comprehensive Planning Assistance Program, authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 195, as amended, and through a grant from the Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs. Through contributions from the Windham Regional Commission towns, Westminster was one of the towns chosen to participate in a survey to preserve certain roads, within the town as "scenic roads." The actual survey was made in 1978, headed by Mary Ashcroft, assisted by Elizabeth M. Simonds and Gunther Lanson, representing the Westminster Planning and Development Commission. Working as a team, they traveled every road within the town, using the established criteria for rating the scenic potential of each road.

Mary C. Ashcroft, a native of the neighboring town of Rockingham, and in her final year at Law School, in her introduction to the study, presented the following analysis:

### I. Introduction

There are few Vermonters who haven't experienced the restful pleasures of travelling down a scenic country road. The quiet though sometimes bouncy journey through maple tree and stone wall bounded lanes is salve for raw nerves and sagging spirits. The country road traveller is constantly surprised with glimpses of hillside farmsteads surrounded by green and gold pastures, with distant views of clean, compact villages nestled between blue-purple swells of mountains, and with dark forest tunnels through which a tiny brook twists.

But scenic roads are an endangered species. Population increases and mass migration of former city dwellers into Vermont have caused increased residential, commercial and industrial development throughout the state. As a result, pressures have forced state and local government to improve their highway systems to better serve the modernized economy. Roads are being paved, widened and improved. Fast disappearing are the gravelled, rutty lanes which curve and blend with the countryside; their places are being taken by smooth, arrow-straight roads which provide high speed by-ways for hurrying traffic.

For the sake of safety and speed, majestic trees which once lined the backroads are being cut down, replaced by gravel and scrub vegetation. Rambling stone walls are disappearing, as roadbuilders use the stones for roadbed fill material. Once pleasant views are marred by encroaching power lines, the growth of bushes on abandoned farmlands and misplaced commercial and industrial structures.

Fortunately state officials have refused to allow this desecration of Vermont's backroads to continue unchecked. In 1977, the Vermont legislature passed a bill "to preserve through planning the scenic quality of (Vermont's) rural landscape." The bill (Act 58 of 1977), signed into law by Governor Snelling, enables town Selectmen and state agency officials to designate specific town and state roads as scenic routes.

Once a road is designated as "scenic," after necessary procedures of public hearings and the like, it must be maintained in its present state, allowing minimal changes to threaten its scenic qualities. Straightening, paving and other improvement work must be discussed at a public hearing and accomplished in accord with stringent state standards. Scenic roads may also be exempted from many of the standards

By May of 1978, the SPC with assistance from the State Planning Office, had drafted a rough field guide which presented some guidelines for cataloging the scenic characteristics of Vermont roads. The field guide outlined a rating procedure with which teams of scenery evaluators (road raters) could drive roads and record, for each tenth of a mile, those specific elements which added to or detracted from overall scenic quality. In addition to the preparation of the draft fieldguide, specific criteria for the scenic evaluation of roads were set for public hearing by the Transportation Board. Neither the fieldguide nor the proposed criteria, however, had been extensively tested in an actual evaluation effort. At this point, it seemed advisable to try out the evaluation scheme in order to assess its effectiveness. The Windham Regional Planning and Development Commission (WRC) offered to undertake such an evaluation through a pilot project in the Windham Region. With the assistance of the State Planning Office, the WRC was able to conduct an extensive summer program of field testing the fieldguide and proposed evaluation criteria.

From the road work in Westminster and Putney, the WRC project coordinator was able to compile a range of scores representing high, medium and low scenic values. This range worked well in these towns to give local officials an idea of which roads are more scenic than others, and perhaps which are worth declaring as scenic and which not.

This leads to the next set of questions: Must a whole road be declared scenic, or may only portions of it? What are the size limits—is a road seven miles long too long to be declared scenic, especially if it contains non-scenic sections? Is a stretch of road extending only one or two tenths of a mile too short to be designated as a scenic route? How many miles of roads in town can be designated under this program? The best solution to all of these problems may be to leave the implementation program as flexible as possible. The SPC may suggest that a cut-off score be established, or that a town should not declare more than a certain percentage of its roads as scenic, or that roads over five miles are too long, and those stretches under a half mile are too short for official recognition as scenic. The ultimate decision, however, should be left to the Selectmen and Planning Commission in each town. They are the ones who can best evaluate the needs and feelings of the townspeople in establishing a successful scenic roads program.

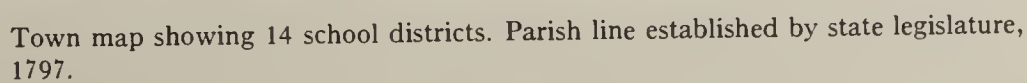
As long as the methods of cataloging the scenic features of town roads are established by the SPC, there will be an element of uniformity throughout the state in recognizing scenic areas. What the individual towns wish to do once those areas have been identified should be left up to their own discretion.

The complete report for Westminster's roads includes road map plans scored and evaluated, using color-coded scenery profiles, to provide a quick visual comparison of the town roads. It enables one to observe where the most scenic areas are located without having to study the entire road system.

This report, in its entirety, was filed in the Town Clerk's Office in 1978. How and when particular "scenic roads" are permanently so designated, is the decision of the Board of Selectmen and the Town's Planning and Development Commission.



4814



Town map showing 14 school districts. Parish line established by state legislature, 1797.



## WESTMINSTER WEST



### SALMON FISHING IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER—WESTMINSTER 1761

A historian's delight is the finding of an old trunk or box stuffed with letters, reflecting the happenings of the early days or written by ancestors bringing to light little known facts about family and the region where they lived.

One such letter was recently unearthed from a box of letters, written in the early 1800's, by Eugene P. McAdams, Charlotte, North Carolina, who is researching his family genealogy. According to his research the letter was written by his great great grandfather, William Hall, Bellows Falls in 1820. Written in long hand, some parts are difficult to decipher. The following quotes are written in reference to Westminister.

Judge B. Burt came to Westminister in April 1761, with Ephraim Ranney, Azariah Dickinson, Michael Gibson & Zacharia Gibson, Jesse Burke. . . .

B. Burt came to Bellows Falls in a canoe with Capt. Moses Wright, from Northfield, Mass. in the 1760's and there were no settlements from Northfield to Bellows Falls at that time. There had been a few families made openings before but had benn compelled to leave in consequential of the French War of 1755. . . .



The first taking of Salmon & Shad was with scoop nets in 1761. These fish were then so numerous in the eddy that it looked as if a person might walk over the river upon them. The same (?) and for taking fish in the eddy was made in Westminster in 1768. . . .

Salmon have been taken in a (?) at one time averaging 18# and more then 1500 hundred (?) at one time. Six salmon have been taken upon the falls by spearing in one night, averaging 30#, 3 persons took in the same way, in one night 36 salmon averaging 29#. Moose and deer were very plenty in 1760 to 1775. . . .

At the present time the Conn. River Watershed Council is promoting the revival of salmon and shad in the Connecticut River. The New England Power Company is building a fish ladder at Bellows Falls (fourth in series of ladders up the river from Holyoke) to provide means for the fish to travel up the river as was done in the early days. It seems appropriate to include this information in our historical findings in this second edition of the History of Westminster.

Hayes *History of Rockingham*, states William Hall, became an early merchant in R. village; owned a grist mill near the mouth of the Williams river. Later a merchant in B.F.; the firm of Hall & Green; in 1822 had a commission house in Hartford, Conn., in partnership with Thomas H. Brace, and did a large business by boats up and down the Connecticut river; dealt heavily in wool. Built a brick dwelling near the intersection of Church & Westminster Streets, was his home until his death. It later became the home of Hetty Green.

Thanks to the Bellows Falls Area Chamber of Commerce for forwarding to me the letters from Eugene P. McAdams. E.M.S.





















THE OLD TAVERN